

S E R M O N S

F O R E V E R Y

S U N D A Y

In the Y E A R.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By F. BL. TH, DISC. CAR.---S. T. P.

V O L U M E II.

For the Third and Fourth Quarter of the ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.



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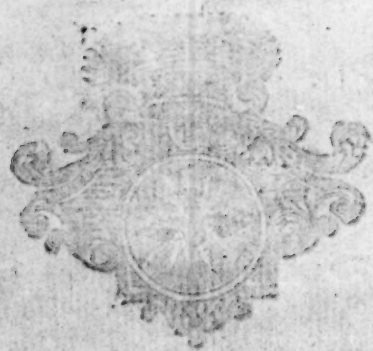
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IN TWO VOLUMES.



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Then shall love the Lord thy God from thy whole heart, &c. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. Now essentially we are bound to fulfill the commandment of loving our neighbour sincerely.

S E R M O N

On TRINITY SUNDAY.

St. MATTHEW, xxviii. 18, 19.

All power is given to me in Heaven and on Earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

BUT One; yet Three in number? Stupendous mystery! No less than, Three all from Eternity subsisting ineffably distinct; and still eternally but One? Infathomable depth! A parent God not older than his Son; a God, and yet begotten, and yet as ancient as his Father; a third proceeding from them both, still God, and still as old, as great, as much a God as either or as both? Several; and yet inseparable? Distinct and yet essentially the same? O knot of sacred mysteries too high for man's or angel's mind to reach! Abyss too infinit for finite beings to sound! Well was that glorious light and ornament of Christian Faith, St. *Augustin*, convinced of this, before he finish'd his wonderful treatise on this awful mystery. While yet this heaven-inspired writer was composing it, it happen'd on a time, God so disposing for his and our instruction, that his external faculties, wearied with too intense fatigue, call'd on the faint for some few minutes relaxation. Accordingly, faint-like, submissive to his humble state, he obeys the voice of God in nature's call; and, to refresh his mind for future study, tries to divert it from the present with an evening walk along the neighbouring beech. The seas were calm; the strand was dry and smooth; the air serene; and nature seem'd to court him to a guiltless dissipation. Still *Augustin* walk'd only with his feet on earth; his mind was travelling through the highest Heavens in search of the uninvestigable Trinity. But, O the graciousness of God! Thus sublimely musing, as he walks, an infant object suddenly attracts his sight and calls back his soul once more to the earth. The infant, most exquisitely beautiful of form, with a little shell in his hand, seem'd eagerly busied in filling-up, with water out of the sea, a shallow pit which he had dug in the sand. Startled at the sight, the holy prelate lays all other thoughts aside, and at once terrified at the danger and alarm'd with concern for his

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safety, forgetful of the gravity of his station, hurries towards him. "O, my dear lovely babe! be cries, see'st thou the danger thou art in. What art thou so rashly busied about? What? says the beautiful object,--I am going to confine that wide, that exorbitant sea within the narrow limits of this little slender pit which you here behold." "Idle attempt! says *Augustin*; why precious innocence! That ocean is too enormous, and thy pit too little to contain it. Thy years and thy forces are too limited to compass so immense an undertaking." "And yet, replies the infant, I shall much sooner compass it than thou wilt accomplish the work thou art aiming at. Thou wilt needs explain and render intelligible the inexplicable, uninvestigable mystery of the Trinity in one little volume? How much greater an extent of life and power then has't thou not need of than I? For I, once more I tell thee, shall much sooner include all the floods of sea in this trifling space, than thou canst hope to explain to others, or, even comprehend thyself the ineffable, incomprehensible Trinity of God." O worthy maxim of an angel's mind! St. *Augustin* found it such. The angel in disguise disappear'd in an instant; and, leaving this important instruction ingrafted in his soul, left the sublime doctor to return thanks to the Almighty for guarding him, in so important a matter, from the dangers of a too daring presumption, by the assistance of an humble faith.

Let us too, dearest auditors, return our humblest thanks and praises to our gracious God for this important lesson: In which we are no less concern'd than was the venerable father. Our safety is as much at stake, as his, to honour and believe the awful Trinity. For we are Christians, thanks to God's prevailing grace: And the first requisit to Christian Faith is the belief in this abyss of wisdom, which we cannot, may not, try to fathom. "Whoever will be saved," says St. *Athanasius* in his Creed, "must before all things, hold the Catholic Faith. Now, this is catholic faith, that we revere one God in Trinity, and that Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor separating

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"separating the substance." This is the fundamental basis of a Christian's faith: This the chief mystery which our divine Messiah came from the highest Heavens to make known to us. And therefore the last injunction he left to his apostles was, to initiate us his disciples, by instructing and grounding us first and before all other things in the belief of this. "Going, says he, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And to confound the pride of human reasoning, let this be your sanction that I have commissioned you, this your authority that I have sent you: I the God of wisdom who cannot be deceived, the God of goodness who never can deceive, the God of power reaching from end to end strongly and disposing all things sweetly. Yes, All power is giving to me in Heaven and on Earth; and by this power I send you, Going therefore teach ye all nations to believe what I have taught you, that there are three who give testimony of this infinit power in Heaven, the Father, the word, and the Holy-Ghost: And these three are One."

In consequence of this injunction then it is, dear auditors, that the Holy Church sets annually apart this sacred day to honour and adore the uninvestigable mystery of the Trinity. And 'tis in consequence of the same, that I her minister, with trembling zeal, presume this day to rouse your piety, and excite your faith to honour and believe what you nor I, nor even angels, can, without presumption, hope to fathom. Down then, O pride of human impotence! And with profoundest humble faith this day adore the unsearchable omnipotence of God. If no created eye can steadily behold the distant weakened rays of a created sun; can human genius hope to penetrate the center of uncreated glory? If scanty nature and it's noon-day evidence of causes are still too dazzling for finite wisdom's feeble force to comprehend; shall it be capable of fouding God's immensity? Who, let me ask with St. Paul, who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or, who hath been his counsellor? Down then! O down, presumptive curiosity! And, ere thou dive into the hidden depths of God's infinity, first measure with thy arms the narrow-bounded seas; first span the limits of the universe; and with a finger touch the foot-stool of the Almighty's feet. Still shalt thou be infinitely distant from himself. O depth then, let us cry with our apostle, O depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments and unsearchable his ways!

Away then, Christian auditors, away with reason now: For it is useless here. But? Useless? No. Reason, though it be not the torch of faith, it is nor go before belief;

but it may follow and point-out it's graceful solid form. The mind of man, in short, can form no arguments to make us comprehend one single point of faith: But it can help us to conviction, even in this sublimest of mysteries, that what we cannot comprehend, cannot, without renouncing reason, be discredited. Such is the use then I propose this day to make of reason, to convince you, that this awful mystery of the sacred Trinity, which we are here assembled to adore, though infinitely above the comprehension of reason, is not repugnant to reason in the true motives of credibility. And to avoid confusion in so exalted a subject, I shall therefore divide this discourse into three parts.

I. I shall endeavour to convince you, that there is a God.

II. I will demonstrate to you, that there can be but one God: And

III. I shall prove to you, how very consonant with reason it is to believe in the reveal'd truth of three persons in One God.

All which I shall conclude with some reflections on the manner in which we ought to behave in consequence of this orthodox belief.

"O Father, Son, and Holy-Ghost! Great undivided God! Forgive this bold attempt. Ascribe it not to our presumptive curiosity, but to the ardour of our zeal for thee, that we thus launch into the depths of thy immensity. Guide us on safely, through this maze of mysteries, to an unconquerable faith; that, since we must be lost to ourselves when e'er we plunge into thy vast abyss of glory, we may be only lost, to find ourselves again more perfectly and happily in Thee."

I. It is one thing to know that God is; another to know what He is. That every creature who has the use of reason knows or may know: This not even the angels in Heaven can completely comprehend. What we mean by the word God is a supreme, self-existent, eternal, independent being on whom all other beings depend. This being then is infinit and consequently must require an infinit mind to comprehend what he is. And yet the angels and saints now see him; and we, when join'd with them in Heaven (if happily we arrive thither) shall see him, and see him wholly, and see him just as He is; but how? Not with an infinit comprehension, but with extatic adoration and such a fulness of blissful knowledge as will absorb all faith, and leave us nothing more to wish. For the easier understanding of which, if it be lawful to compare immensity with littleness, thus does a man survey a ball or little globe within

and sees it as it is; yet cannot with his eye reach to the center of it, nor view at once the utmost lines of its circumference: Yet does he see it wholly in it's varied views, and sees all he can wish to see of it as a ball or globe: he sees it in the bulk, and sees it wholly, as it is in his possession. Nor can such a man be said, not to enjoy a perfect sight of what he thus beholds, because he sees not every part at once. Since that is not compatible with his carnal eye. So neither can the saints or angels be denied a full and perfect sight of God, because their knowledge comprehends not his immensity. Enough is it for the happiness of finite beings to see their God face to face, just as he is, and just as much as their created nature can support: And seeing thus, they may be truly said to see him wholly, and see him in himself; although his nature is too infinit for any mind, but his, to know completely *what he is*.

Yet do the blest above know infinitely more of God than we can reach to know, on this side of death. For such is the infinity of his perfections, and such the finite limited reach of our understandings, that, unable to define him, we are reduced to describe God in a negative, merely negative manner, by excluding from our ideas of him, as much as our weakness will permit, all those imperfections which are attach'd to the nature of created beings. According therefore to the imbecility of our most spiritualized ideas, we call him a pure spirit, supreme, self-existent, eternally immense and independently infinit. We call him a spirit, to exclude, from our idea of him, all which is corporeal or favouring of the imperfection of matter: We call him a pure Spirit, to distinguish him from rational souls; which, tho' spirits, are of an imperfect kind and confin'd to an affinity with matter: And we call him Supreme and Self-existent, to distinguish him from angels, who, though they are pure spirits, yet are infinitely inferior to him, are creatures made to exist by him, and are of limited perfections received from him. By his Eternity we mean to point-out the duration of his existence; which had no beginning and shall have no end: By his Imensity we understand his unlimited power; which extends itself over all things, and even over the wide waste of nothing: And by his independent Infinity we mean to express his incomprehensible wisdom, goodness and other attributes; by which he knows all things, produces all things, moves, governs, changes, preserves and supports all things. So far then it is plain, that God (as God) has no body; that we cannot behold him with corporeal eyes; and cannot form any true idea of his nature, but by means of the beatific vision in Heaven; or here on earth by the enigmatic mirror of faith, which is a gift of God in our souls. To faith therefore we

are indebted for all the knowledge we have of *what God is*.

But then to know absolutely that *there is a God*, we need but have reason and make use of it. For this the feeble light of reason is sufficient to point-out to us, as *David* well observes. The light of thy countenance (O Lord) beams full upon us all. This every effect of nature speaks, and every being, which has a voice, proclaims: All, all agree, that *he made us, and not we ourselves*. Let us look round this wide creation, and view the various parts of it: What an infinity of proofs will it not afford us of a sovereign deity? Eye but the vegetable world: What plant, or shrub, or humble weed, is there unstampt with marks of his almighty power, from the tall cedar, the lofty pine, the gayly-crested elm, or the majestic oak, down to the smallest leaf of grass which almost eludes the sight? How regular their various forms! How nice their texture? How just the fibres which connect their several parts; and to proportion add both strength and beauty! not to go lower or higher than the reach of every eye, *consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: They labour not, neither do they spin*. And yet, (as your Saviour tells you) *not Solomon, in all his glory, was array'd like one of these*. By whom then are they cloathed thus gayly? Who furnishes them with the nutrimental juices suited only to their nature, and with the almost imperceptible canals, which, winding in discreet meanders, furnish every part with life and vigour? Who gives them the *farina* to propagate their species; and bids them rise and bloom and fade, obedient to the seasons, as the seasons to the year? In a word, who can produce such beauty, order, and solidity in the infinity of vegetables, suited to every climate, every season, every sense, but an almighty power, such as God?

If we observe the sensitive creation; what being can we view, which does not speak an infinit creator; whether with wings it skim the air, or tread, or crawl upon, or creep within the earth, or fend the liquid waters. Who gave this infinit variety of beasts their several natures, and forms and talents suited to their nature and to the preservation of it? Who gives them life and instinct to pursue delight; to flee the coming danger; to chuse their proper nutriment; and keep the limits of their species? Who taught the nightingale to sing, and yet refused it strength and courage? Who made the lion strong and vigorous; and yet denied it wings? Whence does the stupid hare learn all her doubles, when the first pack of hounds pursue her? Why should not cows yield honey, and bees sometimes produce, instead of honey, milk? at least, if there was not a supreme and infinit power and wisdom presiding over the infinit variety of sensitive creatures

tures in the universe; why should not every climate abound with every living creature? And why should not every living creature produce promiscuously another species than it's own? Why should not whales engender lions; lions breed eagles; a turkey hatch a lamb; and sheep bring-forth a serpent? All which the laws of nature have forbidden: Indeed, for beauteous variety, the utmost dispensation of production is, that where two kindred species join, a third may be produced: But all beyond the first of every motley breed is barrenness and nothing. Chance can have no hand in this harmonious regulation. Else—why could not chance confound this order, and once, at least, make mules beget a mule, or give the properties of one determin'd species to another? There must then be granted a sovereign power presiding over all, guiding, confining and giving laws to all.

The same will appear; if we consider the lifeless part of nature: Whether we view the liquid air, the rolling streams; or soar with telescopes to view the skies; or even confine our observations to the ground we tread. Why will not every soil yield every fruit? Why will not every clay ripen to ductile gold, or every pebble harden to a diamond; but that some author of all soils allotted all their different fertilities; Why shall one kind of fish engross one kind of food, if not directed by some maker of both fish and food? Why shall the seas, enraged by ruffling winds, rise into billows and out-top enormous mountains, yet not presume to over-flow an humble neighbouring plain; if there was not a sovereign presider over sea and land to check it with a *thus far thou shalt come and no farther*. Why does not the air form a like climate in every part of sea and land; at least, at different times? Why can't all constitutions live with equal pleasure every-where? For whether we suppose this globe of earth and water to move round it's axis, and this to move about the sun; or, whether we conceive the earth to stand immoveable, and that to roll about it; certain it is that, that and all the planets spread their influence over the whole at different times: How comes it then, that the variety of changes in the spheres, and all their seeming confusion of eclipses and other motions make no change in these; but with harmonious order (each year) bring round the different seasons suited to each different climate? What answer can our reason give but by recurring to a sovereign power controuling the earth, the seas, the air and heavens?

This will appear with fuller lustre; if we consider that world in miniature, *Mankind*. Man is a little world composed of all the elements; govern'd and set in motion by his intellectual faculties; containing in himself all which is excellent in every part of the created nature. Yet, who made us what

we are, beloved? Whence do we derive our being or our excellencies? From ourselves? No. No more than brutes can we attribute to ourselves what we have nor what we are. Whence then? From our fore-fathers? But whence did the first father of us all proceed? It must be from some higher power, who made the larger world and drew this miniature from it. If you will chuse to call that power an angel, seraphim, intelligence, or any other name? Who made that power? If he made all things himself unmade; whatever name you call him by; he is the God, we are talking of: If not; we must go-on from power to power. And as there is no human mind which can run-on to an infinity; we must, at last, refund all powers and their effects in one creative independent power, unmade and making all: And that is God. Thus will the varied motions of second causes still unvaried (traced to their fountain-head) point us out the necessity of a supreme and self-existent agent; who sets all things in action, himself unmoved.

Perhaps, some speculative wit may think to elude the force of this plain reasoning, by alledging, that each principal part of nature has a superior intelligence of it's own presiding over it. I'll grant it for the sake of argument. But were not all these pretended superior intelligences made by one superior to them all? If so; by whom was this superlative intelligence produced? If by no other; then there needs no more arguments to prove a God. This sovereign intelligence producing all other beings himself produced by none, is supreme, self-existent, eternal, and independent: Consequently God. Or, if he owes his being to another prior to himself, who does that prior being owe his existence to? If to another still before; we must go-on till we come at some first being, who owes himself to none: And that is God. For this is self-evident that nothing can make itself. Action supposes necessarily existence in the agent. Nothing can act before it has a being: And therefore all beings must exist before they can produce. Whereas could we suppose that any being made itself; we must allow two contradictions, that the same being did at once exist and not exist. It must exist, or else it could not make itself; and it must not exist, or else it could not be made. It is then absolutely impossible for any being to make itself. All beings therefore which have a beginning must be made; and every being which is made must owe it's existence to some superior being, made or unmade. If made, he owes it to some other; And if unmade; then he is God. Again, every being which is made must presuppose a time in which it was not; since nothing created can be of infinit duration. And if it be objected, that time is the being which produced all others; not to elude the objection by answering, that

that time is nothing permanent, no real being, and consequently incapable of producing any being, let it suffice to confute this argument with asking: Either time itself was made or not: If not; then we shall make a God of time, by ascribing to it the properties of a God's power, supreme and self-existing, eternal, independent, unmade, yet making all things: And thus shall be obliged to own, *there is a God*. Or, if we say more rightly, that time itself was made; then the maker of it existed before all time, consequently his duration is infinit, and then he must be an infinit supreme and self-existent durable; and therefore God. Thus true it is, as St. Paul tells the Romans, that *the invisible things of God . . . are understood by those things which are made*.

How vain then, how wretchedly empty, as Solomon observes, are not those men, in whom there is not the knowledge of God; when every being is stamp'd with his omnipotence! How befotted they, who, attending to the works, have not acknowledged the workman! What senseless obstinacy, to deny or doubt of a sovereign deity; when plainly demonstrated in his works, and by the joint consent of all the sober part of human kind? For, though there have been, and still are, some ignorant mortals bemused with a plurality of gods; yet even these have ever owned one God superior to the rest, and father of, or tyrant over all. However wrong then the notions may be, which some have entertained of God: All nations, all religions, and all degrees of men combine in owning a supreme and independent being. If then there are a few wretches, a few evil men, who dare, in spite of the conviction of their minds, say, in their corrupted hearts: *There is no God*; they are only profligates, whose consciences make tools of their understandings; libertins, whose intellects are in a slavish subjection to the perversity of their hearts. Reprobates, in a word, who, conscious of the inconsistency of their flagitious lives with the belief of a God, are under the miserable dilemma of either denying his existence, or acknowledging themselves worthy of his severest vengeance. Hence the miscreants, wishful to evade the punishments due to crimes they want the courage and grace to reform, endeavour, though in vain, to bring themselves up to the disbelief of what they cannot conceive without terror and dismay.

II. But "why, perhaps some illiterate persons may say, why may we not conclude from what has hitherto been said, that there are more Gods than one? Why may we not suppose a God presiding over every species; at least, over every element or principal part of nature?" I answer, Christians: Because it is absurd, nay impossible, for two Gods to subsist, and consequently for any more than one: For, if there could be two Gods;

there might as well be two, nay twenty, millions. That there cannot be two is demonstrable from the very idea we have of God. By the word God, we understand a Being infinit, all-powerful, immense, and full of all perfections; which cannot be consistent with the supposition of more Gods than one. For --- Could there be two Gods, either One of them would be dependent on the Other, in the exercise of his power, or both would be independent. Which-ever of them was dependent, he could not be all-powerful it is plain, while he wanted power to shake-off his dependency. Neither could he be infinit in all perfections, since he must absolutely be supposed deficient of an authority equal to the God on whom he depended. And if we suppose both these Beings to be independent; then neither could be God: For, both being independent, neither could controul the other, neither could exercise an absolute power over the effects of the other. And both would be unlimited, and yet extremely confined; which is a contradiction in terms. Both would be unlimited, as both are supposed independent on each-other, in their several natures, and operations: And both would still be so extremely limited by each-other's independency, that neither could exercise an absolute authority over the effects of the other, nor assume to himself the sovereignty nor perfections of the other. So that there would be many Beings, over which neither could have a sovereign independent authority. And therefore neither could be all-powerful, nor infinitely immense, nor consequently God. For what do we understand by God, but a sovereign Being, reaching from end to end strongly, and disposing all things sweetly: One whose infinit, immense, Almighty power, nothing can elude. Again if there were two Gods; either one could destroy the Other, or neither could destroy the other; or finally both could destroy each-other. If one could destroy the other; then He, who could be destroy'd, must not be self-existent, nor infinitely powerful and perfect, nor consequently God, since he could not hinder his own destruction. If both could destroy each-other; then neither could be God for the same reason. And if neither could destroy the other; neither could be God: For God is an infinit, immense, Almighty Being, able to make or to destroy all Beings but himself, He himself unhurt. Thus then is it demonstrable not only that there is a God, but that there can be only one God. But --- is not the eternal Father God? Yes. Is not his divine Son God? Yes. And is not the Holy-Ghost also God? Yes. --- Then surely, there are three Gods? No, each in himself is God, 'tis true: But then each is God, by the same deity as the other two are God. And therefore, tho' their persons are distinct, their substance is but one. O mystery too high for naked reason's comprehension!

Let

Let reason then submissively adore, while faith alone now speaks. Enough is it, that God himself, who neither can deceive nor be deceived, has said it, for us to acquiesce. Enough is it, that *He, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth, reveal'd* this mystery to us, for us to believe it and adore. Enough is it, that faith do light the torch before us, for reason to submit and follow.

III Faith then teaches us, that the divine Being is one blessed and undivided Trinity of three persons in one God: Three Persons, who have one and the same nature, one and the same power, one and the same wisdom, one and the same goodness: Three Persons in a word, as St. *Atanasius* rightly says, *whose glory is equal, and whose Majesty is co-eternal*. They are perfectly equal, because the Father is intire in the Son and in the Holy-Ghost; the Son is intire in the Father and the Holy-Ghost; and the Holy-Ghost is intire in the Father and the Son: One is not greater, more ancient, more powerful, or more infinit in any perfection than another. All the difference, as the *Atanasian Creed*, subscribed to by the whole Catholic Church, teaches us, is, that the Father is not made and proceeds from no other; the Son is from the Father, not made but begotten; the Holy-Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made nor begotten, but proceeding. But how shall we comprehend all this? Why truly, Christians, could this be brought within the scope of our limited conception; it could be no mystery, and faith must be useless. All the help then, which human understanding can afford us, is, by familiar ideas, to shew us, that this great mystery, tho' above our comprehension, is not contrary to our reason. To come therefore to the matter, and enable you to conceive as much of it as is possible for human intellect to reach, I shall make use of some familiar comparisons. Yet, by the bye, before we enter into them, let me just caution you to remember, that no comparison of things created can possibly give any full or adequate notion of this mystery too high even for the most elevated angel intirely to comprehend.

And yet to be convinced, that it is not absurd to believe, that *Three distinct Persons* may enjoy but *one substance*; we need but consider the nature of our souls, of the sun, of fire, nay of every plant which grows. Each of us sensibly enjoys *Three powers distinct*, a will, a memory, an understanding: Yet are they not *Three souls*, but one. Heat, light, and rays are three distinct powers in the sun, yet not three suns. Fire, light, and heat are all distinct, and yet the flame, in which they are, is not three flames, but one. Nor is the trunk, the root, and leaf three trees, but one. There is indeed, I own, an infinit difference between these and God's

undivided Trinity. And such there always must be between the finite and the infinit. All I mean to infer from hence is this, that *Unity* is not repugnant to *Distinction*; and therefore it can be no absurdity for reason to submit to faith in the *Distinction of Three Persons in One God*.

"But how is it possible, *you'll say perhaps*, for the Father to communicate his whole substance to the Son and the Holy-Ghost, without losing it himself; nor even so much as diminishing it in the least?" And if the Son enjoys it wholly; how can the Holy-Ghost enjoy it wholly too? But let me ask you, Does not the sun communicate it's light to you? And yet you see it still retains that light. What part of knowledge do I lose, by now instructing you? If I convey my thoughts to you, or you communicate your thoughts to me; do we not both intirely possess those thoughts, without impediment to one-another. That any-one of you here present conceives what I now utter to you, is surely no hindrance to the rest from conceiving it too. Thus then, tho' in an infinitely higher degree, does the Eternal Father eternally communicate, his whole divine nature to the Son, and to the Holy-Ghost, without loss or diminution to himself; and thus do all three enjoy it wholly, without impediment to One-another.

"Still, *says some graceless Arian*, the Son is begotten by the Father; and the Holy-Ghost proceeds from both; They cannot then be equally eternal: Since he, who gives being, must be prior to him who receives it." True: in created beings the giver must be older than the receiver; because nothing can make itself: And therefore what is made, must suppose a being existent before it was made, which was capable of making it. In God the case is otherwise: Nothing is made. And all the priority in God is not of time or duration, but of Origin. The Father then is Origin of the Son, but not the pre-existent cause of him. The Father from all eternity was essentially Father, and therefore never was or could be without his Son, or either without the Holy-Ghost. The Father then is the eternal Origin of his eternal Son, and both eternally are Origin of the Holy-Ghost: Yet not one of them could be the pre-existent cause of One-another. For example (as far as example will bear in this subject) fire is falsely supposed to exist before light and heat, because it is the Origin of both. And yet there cannot be a fire without light and heat. So neither could the sun be sun, till it had light and rays.

But to bring this still nearer to the humble reach of human capacity, one observation will greatly contribute. When you meditate any thing in your mind, which is not immediately before your eyes; You immediately form in your mind an image of the

the thing you are thinking on. Thus if you are thinking on a person absent, or a distant elephant; you frame in your mind the resemblance of a man or an elephant, and fancy you behold it. And such mental man or elephant is call'd by Philosophers the conception, the child, or the son of the mind. Now GOD is a pure spirit, and consequently thought must be essential to him, and his natural operation. GOD then must eternally think; and therefore, from all eternity, having nothing so worthy of his divine thought as himself, he must from all eternity contemplate himself, and consequently must from all eternity beget in his divine mind, the image of himself. There is however this difference between human and divine thought, that human thought begets not the very thing thought-on, but only an imperfect resemblance of it: Whereas, in GOD, all is reality, all is infinit perfection, and therefore all is GOD. Now if we could suppose him but one single instant without the perfect knowledge of himself; he could not be eternally wise, and consequently could not be GOD; and for this image of himself, thus eternally form'd within him, to be capable of giving him a perfect knowledge of himself, it must be real and infinit in all perfections, like himself; and therefore must be GOD. Nor can we hence conclude it to be another GOD, because, as I have already proved, there can be but *One* GOD. This then is his blessed Son, the *Second Person* of the sacred *Trinity*, as the Father is the first, call'd by-St. Paul, and rightly call'd, *the image of his Father, and the figure of his substance*.

Again the eternal Son, eternally knowing the infinit perfections of his divine Father, must love him with an eternal love, infinitely perfect. For the love of what is infinitely lovely and infinitely known, must be infinitely great, to be proportion'd to the beloved and the lover. For the same reason, the eternal Father must eternally love with infinit love his divine Son, so like himself in all perfections, and the same undivided substance with himself. Now, as in GOD nothing is accidental, but all is substance and reality, this mutual encounter of love between Father and Son cannot be accidental, but all reality, all substantial, all divine and infinitely perfect; and therefore, like the Father and the Son, all GOD. This is the Holy-Ghost, the *third Person* of the awful Trinity, proceeding eternally from the other Two; and therefore co-equal and co-eternal to them both; and not different in substance, but in person. For, as I have already proved, more GODs than One there cannot be, tho' One there must be. And less than three Persons there cannot be in this one GOD, nor more: For in a pure spirit immensely self-existent as he is, tho' infinit his attributes, his essence has but two essential acts---to know and will.

Many things, beloved Christians, might be added to illustrate the reasonable belief of this great mystery. But, to include all in few words, let us say all we can; when we have exhausted all the force of human genius; we still shall find ourselves infinitely beneath the comprehension of it. The wisest man is not he, who can reason best in favour of it; but he, who believes in it, and adores with the most humble steady faith. All I have said then was meant, not to encourage you in any presumptive endeavours to measure it with reason; but rather to strengthen your faith in it, by convincing you, that, infinitely superior as it is to reason's reach, reason can suffer no debasement, but will be elated, by submitting to a religious faith in it. Your safety, Christians, does not depend on rashly diving into this unfathomable depth; but in adoring at an humble awful distance. And it will finally appear more to your eternal happiness to have honour'd the belief of it, than to have attempted to comprehend it.

Go then, rash souls, whose curious presumption will be fed with reasons for the profoundest mysteries of our holy faith; and learn of St. Paul the weakness of your mind; and thence cry-out with him, *O depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD!* Let it suffice to strengthen your belief, that truth eternal, who cannot deceive nor be deceived, has graciously reveal'd it to you. Let it suffice, that he, *to whom all power was given in heaven and on earth*, sent us to teach it to you, *baptizing you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy-Ghost*. And reflect, that the credit we owe to his sacred word, obliges us to believe it, tho' we cannot comprehend it. And *Blessed are they, who have not seen, and yet have believed*. Believe then; and honour what you believe. Be assiduous to pay the sacred Trinity that sovereign homage which is due to it from every creature. Can you believe this sovereign deity to be all-wise, all-good, all-great, and present every-where, yet not behave with just regard to him: Surely it cannot be. Be ever then, dearest Christians, attentive to the presence of GOD: Reflect in whose presence you stand every-where, and at all times; and you will always conform your actions to the dignity of the monarch before whom you are. You will never presume to speak of him, or to him, but with utmost reverence: You will never dare to offend him; but will, on the contrary, frequently direct your thoughts, your works, your words to him, with bended knees and bended hearts, and live in a perpetual dread of all which can displease him. The power of a great man will always induce us to stand in some fear of him, as his goodness will compel us to love him, and his presence to shew him respect. Let then the Almighty power, goodness, and omnipresence of GOD, but fill your minds; and they will have a like effect on you.

Adore then often this sacred mystery, with acts of faith, of hope, of love; and frequently return God thanks for graciously revealing it to you. Think on this favour done to you, preferably to thousands, who are still ignorant of it: And, to express your gratitude, endeavour to communicate the knowledge of it to as many as you can. And above all do you yourselves study to engrave it in your hearts. Implore incessantly the blessed Trinity, henceforth to pardon you the crimes, by which you have dishonour'd it. Intreat the power of the Father, to forgive your sins of frailty: Beg the wisdom of the Son, to remit your sins of ignorance and folly. And implore the goodness of the Holy-Ghost, to pardon your sins of premeditated malice done in opposition to his grace. Do this, whenever you sign yourselves with the sign of the cross: Do it e-

specially on Sundays, which are solemnized by the Church to the honour of the blessed Trinity: And more especially on this sacred Sunday, instituted for the public adoration of it. But do it on all days, and every hour in the day. And since, perhaps, you have not hitherto let any day pass without giving some offence to the Blessed Trinity; endeavour to repair the injury done, by suffering no day henceforth to slip, without doing some particular honour to it. By this means you will merit to have your faith in this awful mystery, confirm'd and augmented in this life, till it shall please the blessed Trinity to drown your faith in blissful endless certainty, amidst the assembly of saints in heaven. To which the Divine Mercy conduct you, I beseech God: *In the Name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the First SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. LUKE vi. 36.

Be ye merciful, as also your Father is merciful.

BUT for these ineffably gracious words of my text, beloved audience, I should be at a loss to understand the sublimely emphatic St. Cyprian, when he says: "O what a glory must it not be for us, to resemble our God! What a beatitude, to have in our power the practice of virtues which may lift us to the merit of praises, like those which are given to God!" That man was capable of a certain distant analogy with God, in the composition of his nature, I never doubted. I could not have a soul; or this soul must want a will, a memory or an understanding, or all; if I did not know, if I did not feel, that the God, who made me, form'd me and all mankind, like me, to his own Image and Likeness. * Yet such is the infinit distance between God and us, that I should have thought it a daring degree of presumption for insects like us, to aspire to a share in the Divine praises; if I did not, this day, hear my Saviour invite us to it: *Be ye merciful, as also your Father is merciful.* St. Leo indeed observes, and very justly too, "that man was created to the image of his divine Lord, on purpose that he might become an imitator of him." But I should still have thought it a sufficient honour for man to aspire only to the humble imitation of those virtues, which he vouch-

* Genesis i.

safed to set the example of in his own blessed person, after taking human nature to himself. And tho' the holy Father adds, that "the true dignity of human nature consists in reflecting a bright resemblance of the Divine Bounty;" I should have interpreted this to no other sense than the resemblance Christ requires of us when he says, *Learn of me; for I am meek and humble of heart.* But I find I should have been greatly mistaken. It is undoubtedly an enviable honour for man, that he is capable of imitating the very virtues of Christ, as he was man. But this is not all the glory he is call'd to, and capable of reaching. "No, no, says St. Gregory, we are the very progeny of God; not indeed begotten of his nature, but freely form'd by his spirit, and regenerated by his adoption. And so much the more of this nobility do we share in proportion, as we render ourselves more like our Divine Stock, who gave himself to us for our model." It is not enough then for us to learn of the Son of God, made man, to be meek and humble of heart as himself. It is not enough for us to content ourselves with aspiring to a share in the praises, due to the virtues of his human nature. We must rise yet higher, and aim at praises like those given to his Deity, by learning of the eternal Father to be merciful, as He also is merciful.

Our mercy then must be boundless, as his is infinite: It must be untired, as his is unwearied: It must

* St. Mat. xi.

be lasting and unbiass'd, as his eternal and impartial. It must be prompt at all times, extended to all wants, and free to all persons: For so is that of God. Such is the mercy of your heavenly Father, that He maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust: And, of all his Divine perfections, that, which he chiefly exerts with regard to man, is the attribute of his mercy. For us then to be merciful, as also our Father is merciful, our mercy must be communicable to all who want it, to friends or enemies; to acquaintance or strangers; to the worthy, or the unworthy; to soul or body: It must engross all our affections; occupy all our thoughts; shine in all our actions, and be the sum of our ambition. Ah Christians! This is the divine virtue, by which you may approach the nearest to God: This is the perfection, in which the deity appears with most splendor and amability in our eyes: This is the godlike practice, which shall acquire you the most and most solid praises, before God and man: Wherefore, says the Holy-Ghost to every-one of you by the mouth of his prophet, *Let not mercy and truth leave thee; put them about thy throat, and write them in the tables of thy heart: And thou shalt find grace and good disciplin before God and men:* † This, in a word, is the ineffable means which your divine Redeemer offers you, in order to raise you to a participation of the Divine praises: *Be ye merciful, as also your Father is merciful.* And O! Let me say with St. Cyprian: "O what a glory must it not be for us, to resemble our God! What a beatitude, to have in our power the practice of virtues, which may lift us to the merit of praises, like those which are given to God!"

Remember then, beloved Children, how it is written, that *ye are God's, and all of you children of the Most-High:* † Be then yourselves; keep up to the greatness of your dignity; and act as becomes the children of such a Father, by practising all the works of mercy in your power. I have already proved to you elsewhere § the sovereign importance and fruitful necessity of practising works of mercy in general, as well as the universal facility and indispensable duty of practising those of a spiritual kind. To avoid then all needless irksome repetition, I shall wholly confine myself, in this discourse, to the task of laying before you the indispensable necessity you are under of complying with that other yet easier duty of eagerly pursuing the *corporal works of mercy.* Give me leave therefore to shew you,

* St. Matth. v. † Prov. iii. ‡ Psalm. lxxxi.

§ See Sermon on the second Sunday in Advent Vol. I. p. 25.

VOL. II.

- I. What the *works of mercy corporal*, principally consist in.
- II. What are the fruits they produce, when rightly practised; And
- III. What are the easiest best means to render our practice of them truly beneficial to others, truly fruitful to ourselves.

"O God of pity, and Father of all mercies! O Thou who graciously consolest us with parent tenderness in all our tribulations! Melt our obdurate hearts into compassion for thy suffering images, our brethren in distress: And since we cannot hope to please thee here, nor joy in thee hereafter, without endeavouring to be like thee; and never can resemble Thee till we are merciful, as also Thou art merciful; O give us a true Christian fellow-feeling for all our fellow-creatures' wants. Soften our stunted nature into what it should be; that, like wax before the sun, we may dissolve with pious sympathy at sight of others' miseries, and make them for thy only sake, our own. Let mercy be our sole ambition: And be Thyself our only motive. Let mercy never quit our breast; put it about our throats, and write it in the tables of our hearts: That being merciful ourselves, we may find mercy in thy sight, and life, and grace and glory."

I. According to the great St. *Augustin*, in his ninth book on the city of God, "Mercy is a fellow feeling for the miseries of a neighbour, by which we are urged to relieve him if we can;" Or, as he else-where defines it more fully, "Mercy is that sympathetic emotion of soul, which carries along with it beneficence to our suffering neighbours, and makes us not only compassionate, but relieve them at some cost of our own." This perfectly agrees with what the venerable St. *Gregory* says on the same subject. "Mercy, *fayrè*, (which seems indeed to be derived from misery, the subject matter of it) is so call'd from it's rendering our heart miserable, when we behold a wretched object. For a compassionate soul is always touch'd with grief at the sight of a suffering neighbour: And that sympathetic grief, makes the merciful heart miserable, till it can remove misery from the sufferer." *Corporal mercy* then, beloved Christians, consists in our bearing such a share in the bodily distresses of our fellow-creatures, as not to be able to rest, once they come to our knowledge, till we either remove those distresses, or have used our utmost endeavours to remove them. Now the body of Man may be in distress, while living in society with the soul, or when render'd inanimate by the absence of that. Many and almost innumerable are the casualties, which

may and do oppress the frail and tender frame of human nature, even while in conjunction with the soul, with lameness, sickness, loss of limbs, or senses, rest and ease; and which, if they do not always totally dissolve it, frequently threaten it with dissolution; and generally render the existence of it bitter. All these then are corporal miseries, which, if we have any human feeling, must work in us a fellow-suffering for every human object whom we know to labour under them; and all of them call upon us loudly, to exert our utmost offices of tenderness to relieve each suffering brother. Whenever then our neighbour is afflicted thus with Sickness of any kind, it is a duty of corporal Mercy we owe him to compassionate him; to visit him, where we may; and it will be acceptable to console him; and, as far as our power extends, to relieve his sufferings, if he stands in need of our assistance. Not that our corporal Mercy ought to wait till actual sickness overtakes a neighbour before it exert itself in his behalf. If sickness be an evil, which our mercy should relieve; we equally should study to prevent it. And as no sickness is more grievous, nor threatens the body more with dissolution than Thirst or Hunger, it must needs be a duty equally incumbent on us to guard our indigent fellow-creatures, from either or from both, as often as we have the means to do it.

Nor is the mercy of a Christian to confine itself to the bare removal of a neighbour's bodily dissolution, and the immediate causes of it. No: It must extend even to the guarding him, as far as human effort will allow, from every distant danger of destruction, and even from every discomfort which may embitter life. What miseries is not man's wretched body subject to, when exposed to all the rude extremes of the inconstant seasons; to heats, to colds, frosts, winds and rains; to blasts and filth and vermin, and various infections, for want of decent necessary rayment? Nay what miseries can it escape; when, unprovided with a home wherein to take its nightly refuge, it is reduced to take up with the dewy sunless air for covering in common with the meanest brutes? Not to mention the vicious haunts and vagabond associations which such hardships may expose the needy to, or keep them in: What pains and aches, and tortures must not they frequently endure from evening damps, and mid-night chills and morning fogs? What loss of ease, of sleep, of rest, of limbs, of comfort, nay, of life, must they not linger through, amidst the dangers to which they are subject not only from the unrelenting elements, but even from the more relentless beasts of prey; and still more from that worst sort of monsters, human night-ravens, who rove in search of mischief to effect it, and of innocence to devour it? And surely then, in either case, the breast cannot be human which can heave

without a pain, while at the same time it knows a human creature to be labouring in distress for want of cloathing, or a roof to guard it from excess of misery. It is not then the least of corporal mercy's offices to *cloath the naked, or to afford the harbour- less a roof.*

1 Again, a man may be quite free from pain or sickness, thirst or hunger, or any actual evil, dangerous to his bodily existence: Yet has he limbs, and life, and health in vain; if want of liberty debars him of the enjoyment of them. Rather are limbs, and health and life a burden aggravating human misery, where liberty is wanting. It is true, that man may live in prison or captivity: But such a life is but a lingering death: A wretched state, which every human creature in possession of sensation dreads as much, if not even more than death: Because it is a state of violence to the dignity of human nature born to virtuous liberty and freedom. It cannot therefore but be a duty of corporal mercy to compassionate our living brethren under the afflicting pressure of confinement: And our compassion, to be real, effectual and christian, must exert itself even to the using every fraternal office in our power to ransom or release the captive, where we may without injustice.

In short, if we sum-up the real bodily wants to which all living individuals of human nature may be subject; we shall find they all amount to these; want of health, want of sustenance, want of comfort, safety, ease or liberty. All these are grievous miseries; and all these we ourselves are every-one of us subject to. Therefore is it a duty of mercy incumbent on us, to succour to our utmost power every human creature under the pressure of all, or any one of these, as we should wish for succour from them in the like circumstances. To visit the sick, then, to feed the hungry, to refresh with drink the thirsty, to cloath the naked, to harbour the harbourless, to visit and ransom captives; where we have the power, are the corporal works by which we are to exert our mercy to the living in their several wants. And all the charitable offices which we can render to our neighbour's body are summed up in these.

Let us bestow upon the indigent our goods, or money, or gifts, or loans, or privileges, or employments, or what we will; if we design it as an act of mercy, every favour we bestow upon them is, and must be, intended as one means towards providing them with health in sickness; with nutritive refreshment against thirst and hunger; or with necessary rayment or comfortable abode, requisite to screen them from the dangers of nakedness and vagrancy, or finally to enable them to maintain their freedom and equality in human society, by an equitable discharge of all debts and engagements with others. For these are all the corporal wants and miseries.

miserics which man in this life has to fear, or has to feel; and therefore are all, which we can sympathize in or relieve.

There is indeed another want, another distress, which principally regards the dead: And yet the living are not wholly unconcerned in it. I mean the want of burial. The sovereign dignity which human bodies have received, from their association and affinity with the immortal soul, which animate them, raise them to such an immeasurable distance above the frames of brutes; that they can never be put upon a level, neither while living, nor when dead, with the irrational creation, without the utmost irreverence and injury done to the whole species. To suffer then a human corse to lie exposed in common with the carcases of unclean juments, to beasts or birds of prey, is a gross indignity offered not only to the noble and immortal soul to which it still belongs, but even to all human beings, actually living as well as dead: Nay, it is a merciless addition of disgrace, to the misery of human nature, in giving brutality room to riot, insult and triumph over human mortality. The voice of nature therefore calls upon us loudly to exert our corporal mercy towards the dead (whenever our assistance is wanting) by providing with a decent interment their inanimate remains; out of respect and pity to the deceased, and out of reverence to the surviving species, which could not but be grossly injured and dishonoured in every disgrace which should be offer'd to what is so nearly allied to it as every human corse still is.

You see then, beloved brethren, that our corporal mercy must not confine itself to a stupid, useless, unactive compassion for the miseries of others. It consists not in a bare good-natured sympathy or fellow-feeling which spends itself in wishes and expressions. No, no: It must consist in facts. If a brother is sick, and our station of life will permit; we must visit him: If he wants our assistance, and our time be our own; we must nurse him; cheer up his spirits with words of comfort, cherish his body with wholesome nouriture; and procure him, at your own expence, if he needs it, and we have it to spare, physicians, medicines, nurses, and all other necessaries for the recovery of his health. And where we have it not ourselves, or cannot bestow all or any part of what we have, without grievous detriment to ourselves or injury to our family or creditors; it is our duty, at least, if our credit has so much influence, to solicit such reliefs from those of our acquaintance who can bestow them or contribute towards them.

Nor is it less the duty of fraternal mercy to use like diligence, whenever necessary, towards supplying the hungry with timely food; the thirsty with opportune refreshment; the harbourless with

shelter; the naked with comfortable rayment; the imprison'd with consolation; and the dead with decent burial. When ever then, Beloved, such miserable objects reach your knowledge; the voice of nature cries out to you, *have mercy on them*; and grace cries louder still, *be ye merciful, as also your Father is merciful*.

What! shall this poor family perish for want of necessary sustenance, because the head of it perhaps is dead; is sick; is worse than sick or dead, is indolent or vicious, or at least render'd, perhaps, unable to provide for it's support, by some relentless creditor who has cast him into prison? Shall a whole family then perish thus, I say, with gnawing hunger, while daily you sit down to such luxuriant meals as might supply your wants and theirs if rightly managed? "No, you'll say: But that is not our case. Our tables never are set-out with more provisions than will just suffice for our own family and guests." It may be so. But may you not oftentimes, nay ought you not, to lessen the number of your guests so seldom chosen by the rules of Hospitality, or prudence, or Virtue, or even decency? Or might you not at least reduce the prodigality of your meals? And if you did; does not your conscience tell you, that what you would spare by the less expensive quality of your diet, might snatch the starveling soul of many a half-famish'd neighbour from wringing misery? We shrink at the cruelty of Canibals, who gnaw the flesh and feed upon the limbs of one-another: And what less cruelty is ours; if we can calmly swallow at every mouthful the price of a poor man's dinner, and suffer many a one of them to go without a meal, and inwardly consume for want of one, because forsooth we have nothing left to afford him? For shame then, Christians, be not so merciless, you who are children of a Father, who is all mercy. Send this superfluous dish, that needless portion, to the fainting poor. Search, search your crouded wardrobes and clear them of the moth-eaten trophies of unchristian cruelty. Give this superfluous coat, that needless gown, this other super-numerary garment, where they are wanted, where they are due. Give them to the naked poor, who want them; and furnish thus your Wardrobe in Heaven, *where the thief approacheth not, neither doth the moth corrupt*. Once you have cast them off they are no longer yours. They who stand in greatest need of them, have the best title to them: And this poor babe's that helpless widow's naked limbs cry-out, they are mine. You cannot then be Christians, to any purpose, but that of aggravating the judgment due to your unchristian barbarity; if you see a fellow-creature in distress and not part with superfluities to relieve him. *What shall it profit, my brethren,*

* St. Luke xii.

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*if a man say, he hath faith, but hath not good-works? Shall faith, be able to save him, says St. JAMES? * No, no: It is an idle illusion to hope it. And if a brother or sister be naked and want daily food, and one of you say to them, Go in peace, be warm'd and fill'd, but you give them not the things which are necessary for the body; what doth it profit? For faith, if it hath not works, is dead. †* How many pilgrims, strangers, and poor friendless creatures do you not meet with, in your way, lurking from door to door for want of a home, their only refuge from the untold train of nightly miseries, some open shed, some bleak, damp, dismal ruin, some miserable ditch or dunghill. Can you then be faithful Christians, and yet so merciless as not to stir a hand to skreen Christ's suffering images from such distress; but calmly keep one half of your mansions, nay your out-houses, uninhabited, and leave your Fellow-Christians in a worse condition than your hounds and horses? No, no: Christians; if I must call you so: Your *faith, if it have not works, and much better works than these, is dead* to every hope of Christians.

Shall so many poor unhappy mortals lie lingering in a wretched prison, and bleed with anguish to see their limbs and life made useless confinement, their honest industry obstructed for want of liberty, their numerous family just starved for want of their assistance, themselves consuming with sickness and the famine of a jail allowance; and shall you not have the Soul to part with a trifling sum towards the release of one of these; nay not so much as send them a spare relief, nor even console them with one kindly visit? Where then are the fruits of your Christianity? Where is your faith? Or at least, where are your works to prove the soundness of your faith? Is it, think you, consistent with the faith and character of Christ's Disciples, not only to suffer your Fellow-Christians, for want of that relief which you could give, to yield their wretched lives a sacrifice oftentimes more to wringing penury than bodily diseases, but even to leave their lifeless body without interment a prey to insulting vermin and an nuisance to the living part of human nature, rather than purchase it a coffin or pay the mercenary sexton's or the parson's fee? Go then and boast your Christianity to savage brutes, who have not the use of language to reproach you. But brag not of your faith to the inhabitants of *Canada*: Where, if they do not give the dead a grave; They rescue the lifeless remains of human nature at least from the insults of birds and beasts of prey, by giving them a sepulchre in their own bowels. Alas! What a mere inanimate Belief must not yours be, if all the precious blood which Jesus shed for you cannot influence you to practice these acts of mercy, which were so familiar

* St James ii. † *Ibid.*

to a *Captive* like *Tobiah* long ere your Saviour shed one single drop for him. Ah Christians! Hear but this bounteous *Israelite*, who argues from experience; and I defy you to be merciless, if you have any faith, or grace, or Bowels left. "Of thy Substance, says He, * give alms; and turn not away thy Face from any poor person: For so shall it come to pass, that neither the face of the Lord shall be turn'd from thee. As thou shalt be able, so be merciful. If thou have much; give abundantly: If thou have little; study to impart also a little willingly. ... Eat thy bread with the hungry and needy; and of thy garments cover the naked. Set thy bread and thy Wine upon the burial of a just Man:" That is, in other words, forego thy dinner, or spare a part of it to procure a decent interment for the dead. What better can I add then, Christians, than his dying words? † *Hear ye therefore, my Christian children, bear your spiritual Father. Serve our Lord in truth; and seek to do the things which are pleasing to him; by studying to be merciful as also your Father is merciful.* Be not content with practising your selves the works of *corporal mercy*; but teach your children and your servants the like practice: *Nay command your children, that they also do justices and Alms-deeds, that they be mindful of God and bless him at all times in truth and in all their power, by being merciful, as he also is merciful.*

It is not enough, beloved, that you suffer not any mendicant to depart unbenefitted from your gate: You must do more. You must not wait till the poor come crying to your window; Yourselves must go in search of them. Instead of turning out of doors, like mangy animals, the domestic who fickers in your service, the voice of corporal mercy calls doubly on you to exert a charitable care of him. Then is the time to imitate the bounty of your merciful Father in providing effectually for his relief, in calling in the nurse, the apothecary, and, if needful, the surgeon or physician. How edifying is it not to see a master or mistress, on such occasions, send from table the choicest morsels to a sick domestic! How affecting to hear them give a general charge to all their family, that no good-office be neglected to console the patient and promote his cure! How noble to see a Lord or lady at a servant's bedside, consoling him with promises of care; dissipating his apprehensions of giving trouble or causing extraordinary expences; lessening his pains with soothing advice and spiritual reflections; settling his little temporal affairs and providing for his eternal ones! O Christians! This is being merciful indeed: This is being really parents of families, as you all ought to be to the utmost of your power.

* *Tobiah* iv. † Chap. xiv.

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What degradation will your honour suffer by stooping to a visit in a sick domestic's room? What mighty grievance to step from your apartment to a garret to see him and question him, whether he be well attended or neglected? Nothing can well excuse you from going thither sometimes yourselves, and leading with you even your children, for example's sake, but danger of infection. But even then, if it be unsafe for you or yours to approach him; you ought to exert all your authority of promises or threats, that they, who are set about him, may supply your stead, with kindly messages from you and tender conduct of their own.

If you have no objects of distress, within your walls, beloved; your corporal mercy need not therefore be quite idle, while there are poor sick families, distressful cottages, work-houses, hospitals, or prisons in your reach. No, Christians: If you are truly merciful of disposition; if you are faithful in your love of mercy; these will always find you full employ. In all these there are objects crying-out to you incessantly, in notes like those of holy Job: *

"Have mercy on us: Have mercy on us, at least you our friends: For the hand of our Lord hath touch'd us with sickness, with want of necessities, with penurious captivity. Why do you, as GOD, persecute us, with neglect of our distress. He may do it without injury to his mercy, to correct or to purify us? But why are you fill'd with our flesh, by rioting in that luxurious plenty, part of which should be applied to hinder our wasting away in want and misery? Why do you not rather, moved by our wants, be merciful, as also GOD your FATHER is merciful? O who will grant us, that our words may be written in your hearts? Who will give, that they may be drawn, by some compassionating hand, in a book, where you may often be reminded of them, with iron pen and in a plate of lead? Or else, if your breasts are flinted into cruelty (which Heaven forbid! O that our cries, with steel, might be engraved upon that flint." O Christians then be merciful: Harden not your hearts against the wants of such. Stop not your ears to cries like these, which every hospital and prison and almost every other cot would echo to you; if the voices within were but as loud as the wants are great.

But it is not necessary you should hear the needy's cries, dear Brethren: You know too well their wants, to stand excused; if you neglect what is in your power to relieve them. There are several degrees of corporal Mercy for you to aspire to, ere you can fulfil the great injunction, which your Saviour gives you in my text, *to be merciful, as also your Father is merciful.* The First is to have a

* Job xix.

heart tender, compassionate and easily touch'd with sympathy for the miseries of a neighbour. But this is not sufficient to distinguish us from unbelievers: For this we often see even Infidels possess of. And therefore is it (consider'd merely in itself) of little or no merit, because generally speaking more the gift of nature than our own acquiring. And yet it is a happiness to have this first degree, as it is one step towards our acquisition of the rest, if we improve the grace of God within us. But otherwise it may turn-out our heaviest curse, if we are perverse enough to render it such, by being, in spite of a relenting disposition, relentless in our practice. The second degree then is to improve our natural yieldingness of heart, as far as in our power lies, to the effectual succour of every miserable object which presents itself before us; without exception of relation, friend, acquaintance, enemy or stranger; of Catholic, Heretic, or Infidel; of good or bad; provided our relief does not in any manner encourage or contribute to their perversity. For it is the distress which chiefly calls on us for succour. Indeed in equal wants, the greater Merit may demand the preference; where there is not a probable assurance of gaining a fresh soul to God, by the inversion: And in this sense it is that we are to understand St. Paul * where he says: *Wherefore, while we have time, let us work good to All, but especially to those, who are of the household of the faith.* But in all extremities of distress, he, whose wants are the sharpest, has the first right to our relief.

Still is it being merciful as yet, but by halves: if we remain unactive till our brethren's miseries perk us in the face. No, if we mean to be amply merciful as our Father also is merciful; we must mount the third degree, and go in search of objects to exert our mercy on: We must prevent the wishes of the wretched with our unexpected succour; and study to make the sad heart glad, before it feels the pain of asking what it wants. The fourth degree is, not to confine the matter of our mercy barely to what we can practice with ease, and without giving-up our comfortable conveniences, but even to share in the distresses of our fellow creatures, by suffering something with them, and giving-up the comforts and conveniences of life to impart to them the necessities of it, if not the solaces. So did our Saviour, who, for the sake of seeking, visiting and consoling the needy, left himself without a place *where to repose his head.* † So did a St. Anthony, a St. Alexius, a St. Francis and many other glorious saints, to become, after his injunction and example, *merciful, as also their Father is merciful.*

But this is not the ultimate perfection of corporal Mercy: There is a fifth degree to reach, and

* Galat. vi. † St. Matth. viii.

which

which we should aspire to, to be merciful, like our heavenly Father. This last degree then is, to be in constant readiness to risk our very lives to save a brother's life. Thus much have many Christian Heroes done before us; or leaping into lakes, to save a sinking brother; or throwing themselves, in times of plague, into an infected city, to nurse and solace the unhappy sufferers in it. And thus, even in our days, do the religious of the order for redeeming Captives out of the hands of Infidel, frequently purchase for others at the price of their own freedom. Yet is this nothing more than Christ first did for them and us. He gave up his liberty and life to rescue us from slavery and death: And so, says his apostle, * We must do: *For in this we have known the charity of God, because he hath yielded his life for us: And we ought to yield our lives for the brethren.*

Reflect then, beloved Auditors; and see if you have mounted these degrees of corporal Mercy, or which at least you are arrived to. And ah! Heaven grant it be not found, upon examination, that you have not slept as yet so much as up one single one of all, unless perhaps it be that of a mere natural tenderness of heart; which, left thus bare and barren of improvement, can avail you nothing towards Eternity. And yet all these degrees have been sanctified by the practice of that Lord, who, this day, enjoins you to be *merciful as also your Father is merciful*. He practiced mercy in every-one of these degrees; and, by the accomplishment of the last, in dying for us all a painful shameful death, reach'd to the ultimate perfection of that mercy which he requires in us.

"But alas, perhaps you'll say, we cannot do as much, poor miserable creatures, as we are ourselves. Our stations or our circumstances obstruct our inclinations. Some of us are feeble, sickly, impotent; Others needy and distressed; and most of us are more in want of mercy than in power to practice it." But Ah Christians! Have a care of mistakes. Beware of illusions! Were but your hearts intirely sound; were but your inclinations warm enough to urge you to the trial; you would quickly find, that all of you (some more, some less,) may severally contribute your certain shares. You O gentry! O rich! O great-ones of the world! You are without excuse; if you exert not an unwearied assiduity, in the practice of corporal Works of Mercy. Your splendor, wealth and power, were given you by heaven for no other end, than to qualify you for dispensers of God's providence to the poor, and to make you faithful useful stewards and purveyors to them. Was it ever, think you, or could it be God's design, that this estate, or those heap'd coffers, sufficient to supply the cry-

* 1 St. John iii.

ing wants of thousands, should be monopolized to bloat the pride, and glut the luxury of one man and his family; while hundreds of families about him are miserably perishing for want of common necessaries, in the very sight of plenty, lock'd-up or misapplied? No: It is infinitely beneath his dignity and shamefully inconsistent with a just idea of God's exalted wisdom and impartial goodness. The Almighty is no exceptor of persons. He created a men, to provide for all a sufficiency alike, altho' in different capacities; Nor did he make them, till he first prepared a world full wide enough to hold them all, and plentifully stock'd with fruits enough to answer all their exigences. He gave that world and all it's fruits to all in common; and consequently all are naturally equal tenants in it, and all have equally a natural right at least to a sufficiency of comforts as well as necessaries in it. And if his wisdom has thought fit to distribute the possession of the goods of nature unequally among mankind; whether he did so positively, or permissively only, it matters very little to our purpose. Since he created all to live by natural means, and none to perish or exist by miracles out of the common course of nature; it is plain, that He ineffably design'd by such a disposition, on one hand, to provide the needy with natural Incitements to Industry and Labour; and, on the other hand, to supply you, rich-ones, with natural means to encourage and reward their Industry with proper equitable recompences, or to relieve their Impotence in time of need, with every necessary succour. Whenever therefore you refuse to part with all above what will supply your real unfancied wants, to redress the sufferings of a fellow-creature in distress; you are not only mercilefs but grievously unjust: You are plunderers of your neighbour's property; leeches of the poor man's blood; and sacrilegious violators of the trust which in their behalf your merciful benefactor, father, friend and God reposes in you: And, as such you may expect one day to be arraign'd at his tremendous bar: *Where justice without mercy will be to him who hath not done mercy.*

But it is not necessary, Christians, that you should absolutely wallow in a profusion of unneeded riches, in order to be excuseless for neglecting to practice the corporal Works of Mercy. No: Where *much is given*, indeed, *much will be required*. † But where that much is not, but little can be given. Yet poor in truth, extraordinarily poor you must be; if you cannot bestow your humble mite. And where you have even but one poor superfluous mite to spare, and want the soul to spare it to a brother who needs it; you are as covetous and mercilefs as the heart-harden'd miser, who hoards-up useless treasures, or bolts and padlocks-

* St. James ii. † St. Luke: xii.

up his grainery-doors in time of famine. 'Tis not your poverty but avarice which shuts your hand and heart. Little or much then be what you have to spare or do, that is what corporal Mercy requires of you. *As thou shalt be able, so be merciful, says Tobiah. * If thou have much; give abundantly: If thou have little; study to impart also a little, willingly.* In short, Christians, upon reflection, you may all, some way or other, be corporally merciful. You, O rich, enjoy your time and substance at full liberty. What then shall hinder you from hunting out the miserable in their hovels, in hospitals, infirmaries and prisons; from searching into their distresses, wrongs and wants; from seeing whether or not they have justice done them by trustees, keepers, guardians or overseers, or what you please to stile them; from accosting them with words of comfort, and aiding them with works of mercy? What tho' you be sick, or lame, or otherwise disabled from doing this in person; you cannot want messengers to carry your supplies where wanted, or to bring to you the poor man's tale. You, merchants, lawyers, tradesmen, may often do as much: Or where you cannot of your own; you may by your solicitations procure from others, wherewith to help the poor, to redress the injured, to feed the famish'd, to refresh the thirsty, to cloath the naked, to give the stranger a hospitable shelter, and decent burial to the beggar's corse. All this you could and would do; had you the poor enough at heart to use the same zealous importunity among your friends, which you exert on every trivial interest of your own; nay oftentimes of others, whose interests it ill becomes you to espouse: Such as the raising a subscription for a wanton ball; the making up a purse for some notorious bankrupt Rake; or forwarding some leud Comedian's benefit. Ah! How many Christians, for purposes like these, shall wear their interest thread-bare with all they know: yet are too delicate to incommode one bosom-friend with a petition in a poor-man's favour. You, O lawyers, who can plead so loudly, and can plead so long, in prospect of a fee! What mighty grievance would it be to you, to espouse as warmly now and then, the rights of a poor injured orphan, heir, or widow, who has nothing more to give you than the poor-one's prayer. Go then and say, you are not merciful, because you cannot be so; and see, if all your quibbles will hold you guiltless when you shall be arraign'd of cruelty at the Almighty's just tribunal.

O physicians! Surgeons! Members of the faculty! What acts of corporal Mercy, have you not the power of exerting towards the poor in sickness? And what must not be your guilt, where avarice or indolence obstructs your practice of such good?

• Chap. iv.

What! shall a fellow-creature die, or be forever maim'd, for want of that advice which costs you nothing but a little breath and skill, merely because he is too poor to glut your avarice with a fee? Ah! If the words of *Seneca* have any truth in them, as they certainly have, when he says, that "He, who has it in his power to save a man from death, and does not do it, may be said to murder him;" how many murderers in this town may we not reckon-up, among surgeons and physicians? Butchers of human nature such; whom therefore no judge takes cognizance of, because they murder in cold blood without a weapon to betray them. Thanks indeed to heaven, I know not one like these, among you, O Catholics: But on the reverse the few, I know, are happily assiduous to the poor as well as rich. At least the only one, I have experience of, is eminently so; not more the doctor than the friend of every poor-man, whom he visits once in sickness; no less careful a prescriber to his patient's soul than sedulous physician of his body; as zealous to visit and attend a beggar as a monarch; and one, who can save a life without a fee as chearfully as with one. Such should all doctors be: And O that all were such! Then should it be each sacred preacher's task to utter in the Church's name, even from the sacred chair, her public thanks to them, with benedictions for the important mercy done by them to her poor helpless members. And then should every priest in every sacrifice send up his warmest prayers to God in their behalf.

But what shall I say to you, O men of labour, care, or servitude, or slavery? Are you exempt by poverty, or by solicitude for bread, or by your necessary toils, or your captivity, from practising the Works of corporal Mercy? Alas! How doubly wretched would not your condition be; if all the hardships you endure were aggravated with the misery of being shut-out from such a God-like exercise? But courage, beloved little-ones of Christ! You are none of you so poor, so impotent, but you may be as merciful as the most wealthy of mankind: Nay more, You may be merciful as also your Father is merciful. You, O working men, who toil incessantly for a little bread, would you but manage well your time; might find more leisure hours than you now enjoy, to work, not only for your families, but a little for the helpless stranger: And would you but retrench all your idle expences; you might soon be in a condition, out of your little honest gains, to share a portion with the hungry, naked, harbourless, or sick; and still maintain your families better than you actually do without such acts of mercy. But putting it to the worst, if you cannot spare aught to contribute towards building and founding hospitals, towards victualling or evacuating prisons; you may visit and console the sufferers.

ferers in them, nurse them, help them, try to beg for them. If even you are (yourselves) in prison, any one of you, you can study to make the burden of your fellow-captives light, by cheerfully visiting and cherishing them, and sharing with them the supplies which may be sent you. *Tobiab* was a captive as well as you: Yet did he not think himself therefore exempt from the practice of every corporal Mercy, in his power to practice towards his fellow-captives. Even you, O beggars, have sometimes more offal than your present hunger calls for; divide then your dinner with a brother who has none, and trust to heaven for more; trust to the Almighty gracious donor of your this day's sustenance, for the provision of the morrow. Or if you have no meat to give; you cannot well be so distressed but you may give or fetch a draught of water, to refresh a fainting neighbour. Do this at least, where you can do no more; and you shall receive the recompence of the merciful. For *Whosoever*, says CHRIST. * *shall give drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water, only in the name of a disciple of mine, Amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.*

II. You see then, beloved Brethren, how extensive are the obligations of corporal Mercy: How plainly the practice of it (more or less) is within the reach of almost every person, state and circumstance: And that it consists not in mere interior unactive pity, or in fruitless words of tenderness, but in effectually relieving to the utmost of your abilities, the several distresses you discover in your fellow-creatures. What then can make you, many of you, so relentless to the miseries of those fellow-creatures, as to the shame of Christianity, nay to the reproach of human nature, you too often are? Surely you never reflect on the rewards attending on the Works of corporal Mercy. Surely you are not so much as sensible, what are the blessed fruits which they produce, when rightly practised; or you would never be so deaf to the complaints of the necessitous, so insensible to their distresses and loud cries; You who are yourselves so liable to the same. You have the poor continually at your doors, crying out, *Have pity on us*: And can you be so void of pity, as to dismiss them every one empty-handed; nay oftentimes loaded with injuries and insults? You have them in your neighbourhood: You have them in your street: You have them next-door to you, and many times under one common roof with you, and know that they are in extreme want of every necessary: And yet can you be so barbarous, as not to part with the least superfluity, and much less with one convenience, no nor take one thought, to succour them? Surely, Christians, your bowels must be hard as

* St. *Matth.* x

iron: Surely your hearts must be condensed into flint; that they are not to be affected by miseries yourselves are liable to. Ah! How can you be thus merciless, and know, that all these miserable objects, are men, like yourselves; if not Christians, and sometimes better ones than yourselves. Most of them of the same country; many of them of the same town; several of them of the same neighbourhood; and some of them, perhaps, of the same descent and lineage as yourselves?

You cannot be insensible, dear-loved auditors, of the sovereign need you are in of the Almighty's mercy. It is by that, that you subsist, that you live: It is that, which provides you necessaries, affluence, riches: It is that which gives you health, food and rayment; shelter, liberty and life: It is that which gives and preserves to you your possessions; gives prosperity to your industry; pours for you, for your children and your family: And was that to desert you; you and yours would strait become as wretched as the most miserable of the distressed objects, who call on you for mercy oftentimes in vain. Ah Christians! *Record then this thing in your hearts with Jeremiah*: * *That it is owing to the mercies of our Lord, that we are not consumed (with want and misery, like many others:) Because his commiserations have not fail'd.* Learn therefore compassion of him, and prove yourselves his children by being merciful, as also your Father is merciful.

You daily stand in need of God's mercy, for the supplies of nature for the day; and you are so conscious of it, that *give us this day, our daily bread* is your quotidian prayer. You stand in constant need of his utmost mercy for the forgiveness of your sins, which are daily struggling to obstruct his clemency, and incense his justice against you: And you are so sensible of it, that *forgive us our trespasses* is therefore your daily cry. But how can you hope for mercy from God, if you are void of mercy to one-another? If he exerts not his commiseration; what power can provide for your necessities? By what prayer of yours can you hope to solicit the divine supplies? Or by what act can you merit it, which will not stand in need of being first purified by his mercy? Know therefore that *abys calls on abys*, † mercy is the surest means of attracting mercy. It is your God and Saviour himself who tells you so: *Blessed are the merciful; for they shall find mercy.* † Whereas the want of commiseration towards your fellow-creatures in this life will exclude yourselves, in the other, from every effect of mercy for a whole eternity. So says the Apostle St. James: || *Judgment without mercy to him, who hath not done mercy.*

* *Lament.* iii. † *Psal.* xlii.

† St. *Matth.* v

|| St. James ii.

O the

O the blessed fruits of corporal Mercy, Christians, not only to escape the rigours of God's just judgment due to us, but even to be assured of his merciful providence both here and hereafter! True piety consists in a perfect love of God manifested in works of mercy to his creatures: And therefore says the Psalmist, * *Blessed is the man, who considereth the needy and the poor. In the evil day, our Lord will deliver him: He will preserve him, and give him life, and make him blessed upon earth, and deliver him not unto the will of his enemies: He will help him on the bed of sorrow, and turn all his couch in his infirmity.* And this is that piety, which the apostle speaks of to Timothy, † when he says, that it is profitable to all things; having promise of the life which now is, and of that to come. Good reason then had the divine author of the Proverbs, ‡ for the advice he there gives us: *Let not Mercy and truth desert thee, says he, put them about thy throat, and write them in the tables of thy heart: And thou shalt find grace and good discipline before God and men.* In fact the rewards of the merciful are not put-off to a future state, but even anticipated in this. The man who is assiduous in the Works of corporal Mercy to his fellow-creatures is a kind of virtuous trader, who, laying-out his substance on others, is sure to receive the pledge of their affections as a security both for principal and interest; which he seldom fails to receive in time of need.

For a proof of this: During the persecution of the Israelites under Sennacherib, the merciful Tobiah, himself a captive, still continued his pious practice of going to all who were in captivity, and giving them wholesome admonitions: Nay daily he went through his kindred Captives, comforted them, and divided to every-one, as he was able of his goods: The hungry he nourish'd; to the naked he gave cloaths, and the dead and them who were slain, he carefully buried. § And O the perils, he confronted in doing all this, in defiance of an angry, cruel, and despotic tyrant's will! But! danger, did I say? Ah! What evils has the merciful to fear? Those whom God is with, who shall be against? Tobiah's mercy found him so much grace before God and man, that not all Sennacherib's authority could reach to hurt this one poor captive in his kingdom. He commanded him indeed, to be slain, and took all his substance left. ¶ But Tobiah had too well laid-out the chief of his possessions, not to find a greater, safer capital, out of the reach of kingly rage, in the affections of all good men. Accordingly fleeing with his son and his wife, he lay nakedly hidden: Because many loved him. ** Such are the fruits of corporal Mercy, even in this life.

* Psalm. xl. † 1 Tim. iv. ‡ Prov. iii. § Tobiah i. ¶ Ibid. ** Ibid.

Ah Christians! Take then advice, from the experienced: * *Of your substance give alms, and turn not away your face from any poor person. But eat your bread with the hungry and needy: Of your garments cover the naked: And set your bread and your wine upon the burial of a just man. † In short, as you shall be able, so be merciful, if you have much; give abundantly: If you have little; study to impart also a little, willingly. For you treasure-up to yourselves a good reward in the day of necessity. Because alms delivereth from all sin, and death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness. Great confidence, in a word, before God most high, shall alms be to all who do it.* O Christians! What greater fruits then can you wish for in this life? To what better advantage can you lay-out your little fortunes, than to purchase a perfect freedom from sin and death; to be secured against want; to be safe under the Divine protection, in the good-will of all your fellow-creatures, to be even beloved by many; and not only to have interest and capital made-up to you, but farther to be enrich'd with treasures in the end?

"Glorious encouragement, indeed, you'll say; were we sure that this would be always the case. "But how often, on the contrary, do not we see the merciful become the dupes of their inconsistency? How many do we not see reduced to beggary, and all the extremities of want, by having through their excessive bounty to others, lavish'd those fortunes which would now stand them in stead? Where then is the prudence in labouring to drag others out of calamity at the hazard of plunging ourselves into it?" But O foolish and slow of heart! These are the arguments of the flesh, of the sense, of the passions, of unchristian pusillanimity and diffidence; not the reasonings of faith and mercy becoming Christians. What worse situation could any of you be reduced to by your fraternal mercy than Tobiah was, at the very time of giving this advice: A miserable persecuted captive; robb'd of his substance; naked, poor, blind, and helpless; render'd blind and helpless by the very act of practising mercy in the burial of the dead; and therefore unpitied by the very persons who loved him? And O too rashly merciful Tobiah, let me also reproach thee with thy worldly friends! What? Even now thou wast commanded to be slain, because of this matter, and thou scarce didst escape the commandment of death; and dost thou again bury the dead? † Yes, yes, Christians: Tobiah is not so easily frightened: Fearing God more than the king, he still took the bodies of them who were slain, hid them in his house, and at midnight buried them. § "And what you'll say did he get by so doing; when wearied with burying

* Tobiah iv. † Chap. ii. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

"and laying him down to sleep, but dung out of a swallow's nest fell upon his eyes and blinded him?"

Ah! What indeed has thy mercy avail'd thee, O hapless god man! *Where is thy hope now: for which thou did'st bestow alms and burial* † Alas! Thy hope is become manifestly vain, and thy alms have now appear'd † But! Hold shallow sighted mortals, replies the holy-man. *Speak not so: Because we are children of boly-ones, and look for that life which GOD will give to them who never change their faith from him to earthly prospects.* § Know then that, if I have lost my corporal eyes, I have gain'd a double light of soul, to see more clearly into the future mercies of the GOD who visits me. Yes, I see more clearly than ever *that thou art just, O Lord; and all thy judgments are just, and all thy ways mercy and truth and Judgment* || Therefore do I trust that I shall not only feel thy mercy in the life to come, but find it anticipated even in this. *We lead indeed at present, a poor life; but we shall yet have many good things, if we continue to fear GOD.* **

O Christian Auditors! Should I attempt to make you reason thus in time of trial would you not many of you, think, I trifled with you? And yet so far is this from trifling, so far was this good patriarch from reasoning wrong, that this very trial itself was sent him as a mercy, for his greater purification: And GOD, in his good time, dispatch'd no less a personage than one of his archangels, to deliver him from it; to restore to him every earthly comfort; and to assure him of his eternal favour. For an assured proof of this, take the celestial messenger's own words: "Praise ye the GOD of heaven, and before all who live confess to him; because he hath done mercy with you . . . When Thou (*Tobiab*) did'st pray with tears, and did'st bury the dead, and left thy dinner, and did'st hide the dead by day in thy house, and by night did'st bury them; I offer'd thy prayer to our Lord. And because thou was't acceptable to GOD, it was necessary that temptation should should prove thee. And now our Lord sent me to cure thee." †† Go, then Christians, and say, if you can, that the fruits of corporal Mercy, even in this life, are not great and certain, when steadily pursued. Go, doubt or deny, if you be able, that *great confidence before GOD most high, shall alms be to all them who do it, and are merciful as also their Father is merciful.*

And if such and so great, beloved Brethren, are the anticipated fruits which a steady pursuit of the corporal Works of mercy abound with, even in this

* *Tobiab* xi. † *Ibid.* † *Ibid.* § *Ibid.* || Chap. iii
** Chap. iv. †† Chap. xii.

life; O think! How ample, and how glorious must not those be which are reserved for the merciful in the life to come? O what transporting joy must it not be for them, to hear the Lord of mercy inviting them to his embraces, amidst an innumerable choir of angels, with these endearing accents, *Come ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* * And 'tis peculiarly to them that Jesus will address himself. In proof of which I cannot forbear repeating here the words of the venerable *Peter of Ravenna*. "In the kingdom of heaven, says he, before all the angels at the general congress of mankind, refuted, no mention is made by the Almighty of an *Abel's* sufferings, of a *Noah's* labours for the preservation of the world, nor of the legislative toils of a *Moses*, nor yet that a *Peter* was crucified like his Saviour. No, no: All which is heard is, that the poor has been fed. In short, all we hear him take notice of is, *I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, &c.* For he alone, who is merciful, is worthy of mercy." In fact, the observation of this venerable writer is very true. The whole work of our beatification, is the work of divine mercy: And this mercy of GOD is chiefly the recompence of the mercy we practice to our fellow-creatures for his sake. For if we read the description which Jesus gives us of it in the xxvth of *St. Matthew*; we shall find, that the glory and blifs, which GOD bestows on his elect, are not given them as a premium of their learning, wisdom, patience, fortitude, sufferings, labours; or any other virtues than their mercy, which is the soul and sovereign of them all. And therefore he says not: "You were wise, you were knowing, you were laborious; you writ for me, you spoke for me, you fought for me; you fasted for me, you pray'd to me, you suffer'd in my name." No, no: All this is past over in silence, for what is far more material. "I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was a stranger and you took me in: Naked and you cover'd me; sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me. For Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." It is their mercy then, above all their other virtues, which will entitle the saints to the eternal blifs, which is prepared for them. O blessed virtue, which can entitle us to such immense rewards! Ah Christians! Can you then believe in these rewards, and not aspire to them, by studying to be merciful as also your Father is merciful? No, Beloved: It is surely impossible. It is derogatory to your piety and hopes: It is inconsistent with your faith: It is irreconcilable with your good-

* *St. Matth.* xxv.

senſe. Give me leave then to draw to a concluſion, by briefly obſerving to you what are the eaſieſt beſt means, to render your practice of the corporal works of Mercy truly beneficial to others, truly fruitful to yourſelves.

III. The advantages then, Chriſtian Auditors, which theſe godlike Works are capable of yielding both to you who beſtow them, and to thoſe who receive them, very greatly depend on the circumſtances of quantity, quality, manner, time, place and motive. The quantity can be only determin'd by every-one's ability. More undoubtedly is required by Almighty God from the rich than from the poor; more from the great and powerful, than from the little and insignificant. The widow's gift was acceptable, tho' but a mite; and a few pence now and then may be ſufficient from a labouring man, who has a large family; nay leſs may be accepted from an abſolute mendicant; when large ſums ſhall be fruitleſs from one, who has much larger to ſpare. Nor is any-one of theſe to content himſelf with doing an act of mercy to an indigent neighbour for once and away. No, ſays a reverend author, "He loſes all the benefit of his former works of mercy, who thinks it enough that he has given a hungry neighbour once wherewith to eat. Whereas he ſends before him to the throne of God ample proofs of his mercy, who never diſmiſſes a poor man ſad from before him." For our mercy then to be effectual, it muſt be laſting and ample as our abilities. We muſt relieve all we can; as far as we can, without grievous detriment to ourſelves and families; as long and often as we can, and their neceſſities require.

Again to make our works of mercy truly beneficial to others, and a rational ſervice to God in us, we muſt weigh well the quality of our works, and the quality of the objects on whom we practice them, to give to the poor our tainted meats, our mouldy bread, our ſour'd liquors, or other provisions too bad for ourſelves or families to eat (if not bad enough for domeſtic animals to reſuſe) inſtead of being an act of mercy, is a cruel inſult to their diſtreſſes. If we have any thing to beſtow; it ſhould be of the beſt; or, at leaſt, nothing worſe than we could comfortably feed on ourſelves. Remember, Chriſtians, that what you give to the poor, you give to Chriſt: *For as long as you did it to one of theſe my little-ones, ſays he, you did it to me.* Judge you then whether it can be merciful, nay decent, or not rather impiouſly cruel, to offer to Jeſus Chriſt the mouldy tainted remains of your luxury. Ah! For ſhame, Chriſtians, be merciful as becomes Chriſtians to be. *Be merciful alſo your Father is merciful.* He gave not to you the reſuſe

* St. Mat. xxv.

of nature, but the flower of it. He even gives you the bread of angels his Son's ſacred body. Give then, when you do give, what becomes a Chriſtian to beſtow, and a Chriſtian to partake of. Uſe yourſelves to the good habit, at your feaſts and entertainments, of ſending your unneceſſary diſhes, to ſome of the poor families in your neighbourhood, whom you know to be ſtarving amidſt a number of young children, while you have an abundance even to a ſurfeit: And take care that they be not the worſt at your table. Remember that the poor, if they are well, have a palate to reſiſh what is good, and a ſtomach to reject what is nauſeous as well as you: And if they are ſick; they (alas poor things!) ſtand more in need of little niceties than you. Imagin then, when you ſend or carry any thing to theſe, that you are miniſtering to your ſick Saviour; and ſtudy delicacy for them, as you would do for Him, under ſuch a circumſtance. O what a glorious work of mercy is not that, which ſome pious matrons employ their leiſure hours in, of preparing wholeſome medicines for the diſtemper'd poor. How pleaſing it is to God, is ſufficiently manifeſt from the many and almoſt miraculous cures which he oftentimes enables their untutor'd clemency to perform, as much to the reproach of human art as they are generally beſide it's rules. But then: O how careful and tender ought not ſuch to be, not to loſe the merit and good effects of ſo noble a work of piety, for want of a ſpirit and diligence to procure the beſt of drugs and ingredients! Otherwiſe they may chance to be cruel in their mercy. How heinous a cruelty then, inſtead of a mercy, muſt it not be for thoſe apothecaries and makers of noſtrums, who give (if it be ever true that they do give) their medicines at a cheaper rate to the indigent ſick, to empoiſon them with the damaged dregs of their ſhop! However they may call it mercy, I can think it nothing better than palliated murder; whoſe only title to eſcape the ſcourge of the law is the eluding the eye of it. Whenever then we do a work of mercy, we are doing nothing to the purpoſe, if we do not weigh the quality as well as the ſubſtance and quantity of the act.

So too, if we do not exam. n into the quality of the ſubject; our mercy may be groſſly miſplaced: And if it is not, it is merely by chance that we are right. When I talk of the quality of the object, I would not be underſtood to mean his perſonal merit or demerit as a man; but the quality of his diſtreſs, and whether he be a real object or not. The temporal ſubſtance of no man is infinite, nor extenſive enough to ſupply the neceſſities of all whom he knows, or may know, to be in real want; and much leſs will it ſuffice to give to all who really feel, and to all who counterfeit diſtreſs. Whatever then is given to an impoſtor is robb'd from ſome of thoſe

whose misery is undisguised. I cannot then but think it an important part of the merciful man's duty, not only to do all the mercy he can, but even to use his utmost diligence that his mercy may not be misapplied: And therefore it surely must be a fault, whenever through indolence of mind we neglect that duty. Since, by so doing, such of us as are stewards for the poor are cruel in our mercy, and become accessary to fraud, to the disadvantage of the real needy; besides encouraging the insolence of such trading beggars: Whereas, when we have done our best to find the real poor, our conscience is discharged; and, though we be imposed upon, our mercy is the same as if it had been ever so well applied. According to the objects which present themselves before us, our mercy may be matter of preference, of equality of choice, of suspension, or of such necessity as cannot be dispensed with: And this we can never distinguish rightly, without some consideration of the quality of the objects.

I mean not, however, by this, Christians, that we are not to afford the poor any relief, till we have first severely tortured them with abundance of cross-questions. No: A person of any penetration will stand in very little need of these to find-out the real objects. Neither is it, but very seldom, of any farther service than to tempt the person we interrogate to lie and impose upon us the more. Mercy to be mercifully practised must be accompanied with affability and tenderness of manners: Otherwise it is making the poor dearly purchase the relief we give them; if, by the number of our questions, the severity of our words, or the roughness of our looks, we make a sale of our mercy at the price of the blushes we put them to. No: Our gifts must be bestowed with readiness and gaiety of countenance, as St. Paul advises, *not out of sadness, or out of necessity for God loveth a cheerful giver.* * And this is the only way in reality to be merciful as also our Father is merciful. He gives not his benefits to us in a reluctant or reproachful manner. Away then, Christians, with all insults to the poor. Whether you give, or give them not; whether you think them worthy of your aid or not; dismiss them without injuries, without reproaches of poverty, of laziness, of the number of their children, and other such like taunts, which often embitter the relief you give, and render their burden of mendicancy intolerable. Remember to deal your mercy to them as God deals his to you: *Who giveth to all abundantly and upbraideth not.* †

But if you wish, dear christian audience, to have your works of corporal mercy doubly useful to yourselves, and to those in whose behalf you practice them; let your manner of bestowing relief be not only affable but edifying and religious. Make your

* 2 Cor. ix. † St. James i.

corporal mercy a means of spiritual relief, an instrument to bring their souls to God. Take thence occasion to instruct the poor in the chief points of Christian faith and morals. Teach them to search into the true causes of their distresses: Exhort them to examin,—whether that extreme poverty has not been the effect of extravagant debauchery; whether this illness be not the child of gluttony, lust, or enmity, or rage; whether that other disorder be not the punishment of pride, ambition, or some other sinful vehement passion. Remind them with holy Job, * *how God is greater than man, and how, that he may turn a man from those things, which he doth amiss, and may deliver him from pride, he rebuketh him also by sorrow in the bed, and maketh all his bones to wither.* And, finally, exhort him to acknowledge the just judgment of God and to solicit his mercy by crying-out in the midst of his distress, *I have sinn'd, and indeed I have offended; and, as I was worthy, I have not received.* † Thus will you render your corporal succour truly merciful by making it spiritually so; and thus will you go a great step towards being merciful as also your Father is merciful. For thus did he practise in all his corporal cures: Thus did he make relief instructive to one, saying, *If thou can'st believe; all things are possible to him who believeth;* ‡ and thus did he with wholesome advice dismiss another, *Behold; Thou art whole: Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.*

But farther, dearest Christians, your mercy will run the greatest risk of being generally mismanaged, if you consult not time and place in practising the corporal works of it. Time then you should consult, not only in the works themselves, but for the very means to practise them. There are objects which require your relief; yet, anon may do as well as now, the morrow as well as the present day: But there are others, whom it is of the most urgent necessity to relieve immediately. Not feeding, not curing, not probing, not dressing the wounds of this man immediately, you negatively kill him. Without this immediate good office, that man will be infallibly thrown into a jail, and his family thereby ruin'd. This other young creature is in the extremes of danger; if you flee not then directly to her assistance, her honour is lost. To run then to this prison, or to that sick man, before these objects are relieved, is mercy ill-timed and misplaced. Some want bread, others want work. This wants it to-day, the other not till to-morrow. One wants it but once; another for a continuance. Time therefore and place must direct your mercy, to make it orderly in the relief of each according to their several degrees of want. One time, if you give your benefaction in public, you give the un-

* Chap. xxxii. † Job xxxiii. ‡ St. Mark ix. happy

happy sufferer a greater pain, than you remove, by the confusion you put him to. Another time your mercy will be double, if you give it in public; either by setting others example to contribute their shares to the relief of a distress you cannot yourself wholly remove; or else by causing edification at least in the spectators, *who seeing your good works, will glorify your Father who is in Heaven.* And these indeed are the only views in which your mercy, to be truly Christian, can be done. And then, as St. Gregory observes, "Our actions are to be in public so as that our intention may still retain it's inward privacy."

Thus far then is plain, that the perfection of our corporal works of mercy greatly depends upon their being rightly timed and rightly placed. And full as evident it is, beloved, that a proper management of time and place will greatly contribute to facilitate to you such works of mercy. You have not wherewith yourselves to relieve effectually the real necessitous. Join then your mites together; erect societies of charity; and, by this means, the mites of many will produce a treasure for the poor. O! What a shame is it not, that in so wide a land there should not be sufficient charity among all you, Christ's best disciples, to found and support above one poor society of this nature; that even the one subsisting should not be enabled by you to afford the poor above a few ineffectual shillings, a fortnight's scanty firing, or a week's penurious provisions; and that the needy must even perish for want of such a faint supply, but for the dear-mis'd gifts of many a labouring man, who generously spares it out of the frugal gains on which his humble family's support depends: While many of you who roll in wealth pretend you know not where to bestow your charity; and others of you are at least enjoying comfortable affluence, yet cry, you have not to bestow in alms!

O Christians! If you have not alms to give; you soon may have. You then, who have estates, and yet are moneyless at the year's end! Lay but a charitable tax on your estates, and appropriate a certain portion of your rents, when you receive them, to carry to prisons, hospitals, and poor men's houses; or to distribute among the priests you know for that effect: And I will promise you in the name of God, that you shall be at the year's end, more rich than you are now. You who have no estates! Lay-by, each month, a portion of your little gains, for the poor; and you shall find your substance, like the widow's jar of oil, overflowing. Give of what you reserve by this means to those for whom you are loudly importuned by the dispensers of God's mysteries to you and of his providence to them. In short, beloved, *be merciful*: Be largely so, *as also your Father is.* Remember that *he who sows*

*sparingly shall reap but sparingly: Whereas he who sows in blessings, of blessings also shall reap.**

I have but one thing more to add, beloved brethren: And that indeed is of as much importance as any thing I have hitherto offered to you. As yet I have given you only the structure of corporal mercy, without the roof; the body without the soul. An edifice is of no use, till it be cover'd: So is the frame of every creature a mere useless, lifeless lump without a soul: And so is every virtue a mere fruitless thing without a virtuous motive. For your mercy then to be like that of your celestial Father, your motive in the practice of it must be pure and holy as his. God in the mercies he exerts to all his creatures has nothing else in view but sovereign good. He has no interest in them: But the communication of his love, for his eternal glory's sake and their advantage, is his disinterested motive for all the good he does them. Such too must be the motives of your mercy. Your corporal works of mercy must not be done out of mere sentiments of humanity; of natural compassion; of fancy, liking, parentage or friendship; nor with a view of earthly interest. For that is acting more like men, like mere philosophers, or worldly politicians, than like Christians. 'Tis being merciful more as mortals than as your heavenly Father. Your motives must be solely to please God and draw down his mercy on yourselves and those to whom you are merciful: Your sovereign end must be to do the will of God; to seek his praise and glory; and to copy after him in being merciful, *as also he is merciful.* And, if views like these have not the sovereign ascendant in your hearts, and all your acts of bounty, be assured, your mercy will at least be fruitless, if not oftentimes pernicious. Away then, Christians, away with those vain, empty motives of wanting, like the Pharisees, to be cried-up for mighty alms-givers; of giving because this or that person will see or know it; because this or that person gave, and you will not be seen to do less than others. Much more away with those dark diabolic purposes of doing mercy for some vicious end, to ensnare, to overreach, or to betray.

To conclude, dearest Fellow-Christians, *Be ye merciful, as also your Father is merciful.* Exercise yourselves in all the duties I have here pointed-out to you, as belonging to the corporal works of mercy, in the most perfect and extensive manner your abilities will allow. Let God be the pure sole sovereign end of your beneficence, who is to be your only recompenser. Never possess yourselves with the false notion, that charity or mercy often does impoverish. Rather does the Almighty generally crown it with rewards of affluence in this life. Nay be assured, that in this world or in the

* 2 Cor. ix.

next, and very probably in both, you will receive abundantly more mercy than you do or can do to others. GOD never lets himself be overcome in good by any of his creatures; but multiplies his benefits infinitely beyond our services or merits. Do you give a little perishable food to a hungry person? GOD will do infinitely more for you in return: He will nourish you with his own unchangeable essence. Do you give so much as a cup of cold water to one of his thirsty little-ones? You give it to him; and, *Amen*, he says, *You shall not lose your reward*, for he will refresh you with himself the living fountain? Do you cherish, and labour to restore the sick to their health? GOD will bestow on you an eternity of life. Do you minister burial to the dead? GOD will bury your offences in oblivion, and

place you among the living for ever. Do you cloath the naked? Ah! bare as you are of virtues, he will dress you here with the garments of his grace, and fit you for the rich robes of his heavenly glory. Do you give the stranger a hospitable shelter in your mansions? Ah! What is that to the shelter he designs you in the everlasting mansions of his ineffable bliss? Thither then direct your course: *Be ye merciful, as also your Father is merciful*; that when you are ripe for his inheritance, you may claim it as his children, and his eternal Son may invite ye to it and say, *Come ye blessed of my Father possess the kingdom which was prepared for you from the foundation of the world*. Which Thou, O sacred Three-in-one, even so dispose, we earnestly beseech Thee: *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Second SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

Being within the OCTAVE of the Feast of the BLESSED SACRAMENT.

St. LUKE xiv. 16.

A certain man made a great supper and called many And they began all at once to make excuse Then the master of the house, being angry, say'd None of those men who were call'd shall taste my supper.

THE natural interpretation of this Gospel, revered Christians, is sufficiently obvious from the words of the preceding verse, which gave occasion to our Blessed Saviour to introduce the important doctrine contained in my text. The words I speak of are the overflowings of efficacious grace in the soul of a person, who sat at table with Christ, and who, powerfully touch'd with the rapturous things he was uttering concerning the future recompence of the just, cry'd-out, in an extasy of admiration and hope, *Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of GOD!** In consequence of which our divine redeemer, to suit himself to the weak capacity of man, compares GOD's goodness towards the saints in his kingdom to that of a certain man who made a great supper. By the food then, the substantial delicacies, the exquisite viands, hinted at in the present Gospel, is to be understood the bread of glory, which the blessed shall

feed upon, and be satiated with for ever in the vision and enjoyment of GOD and his bliss in Heaven. Nor shall we think it improperly compared to a supper, if we consider, that it is the happy conclusion of all the sufferings of life endured for the love of GOD, as the evening-meal is of all the labours of the day which have been endured for self-preservation. Now, this sacred sumptuous banquet was not design'd for a few particulars only, your Saviour tells you. No, beloved: It was design'd for all men, and all men are invited to it. But ah! How many are foolishly prevail'd upon ungratefully to plead the most trivial excuses, to reject the gracious call of their beneficent Lord to their sovereign only good! One is detain'd by his inordinate pleasures; another by sordid interest; and others are wedded to their ease and their luxury. Yet all hope, all vainly flatter themselves, that their several worldly attachments will hold them excused in the sight of GOD. But how grossly do they deceive themselves! For *none of these men, who were thus call'd, and have neglected the call, shall taste of my supper*, says the Lord. Thus much for the allegory of our Gospel, as far as it relates to the end.

There is however another allusion in it full as natural as the former? and it regards the sovereign means by which that blissful end should be pursued.

I mean

* St. Luke. xiv. 15.

I mean the blessed feast of love which our divine redeemer has prepared for us in the life-giving food of his precious body and blood; which contains in it not only a foretaste but even all the assurances of the boundless never-ending bliss to come, and amply forestalls them to all who worthily partake of it. To partake of this costly regale then all human nature is invited. Alas! what a shame and pity therefore is it not, that so great a majority of this favour'd species should, through ignorance, infidelity, or misbelief, have render'd themselves deaf to the endearing calls of GOD to this invaluable entertainment; where Seraphims might covet to be guests and where mankind alone are privileged to sit! But ah! How much greater a shame and pity is it not, that, even, among Christians, Catholic Christians, so many should be found, who *when in honour, will not understand!* * What a dreadful melancholy sight is it not to see some of you, beloved, who are so especially invited to this divine repast and so convinced of the immense treasure of celestial riches it contains, not only void of desire to partake of the Godlike benefaction, but even besotted enough to spurn at it? Alas! Do you never reflect, that all the excuses you have to alledge will but augment the matter of your condemnation? Vain will all pleas of earthly business care or pleasure be to extenuate the guilt of your neglect; when as your Saviour tells you, *None, who are call'd and neglect to answer the call, shall taste of his divine supper.*

It is even so, dear fellow Christians. To you in particular is this spoken; that warn'd by the folly of others and the evil consequences of it, you may learn to avoid their fate. But ah! What pains do you take to avoid it? How often have you been and are invited to partake of the banquet of GOD's glory, by anticipation, in the delicious supper of the eucharist, where GOD himself is both your feeder and food? And yet what reluctance do not many of you shew to accept the invitation! How difficult is it not to induce you to approach to the holy Sacraments, even once a year; tho' there is a positive precept to urge you to it! And how many of you must be even forced by ecclesiastical censures; roused by the most stinging reproaches from GOD's ministers! And with some of you, even all will not do. Alas, beloved! Do you know what you are about? Do you consider the consequences of your perversity in this neglect? It is no less than your eternal exclusion from the Benefits of the divine banquet you are invited to. *I say to you, that none of those men, who were call'd, shall taste my supper.*

It is foreign to my present purpose to convince you, Christians, of the greatness of the divine benefaction, by proving to you the reality of Christ's

presence in this holy Sacrament. No: You are Catholics and know it too well not to be excusable in every neglect of it. As therefore you stand not in any need of arguments to believe in this adorable mystery; and as I shall elsewhere * propose it in an irresistible light to those who as yet do not believe, I shall wholly confine myself to such Arguments as may induce you to render your belief beneficial to you, by acting in conformity with what you do believe.

Upon seriously weighing then the words of my text, I draw three eternal truths from them, first, that the favour done you in this divine institution of the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist is of the highest nature; and consequently, that your ingratitude in rejecting or neglecting it is of the deepest dye. Secondly, that every excuse you can bring, excepting moral impossibility, is trivial and therefore cannot hold you blameless in rejecting it. And thirdly, that the neglect of approaching to the divine Eucharist may be attended with an eternal expulsion from the banquet of his glory, who is contain'd therein; the consequence of which is nothing less than everlasting damnation.

That you may reap then from these infallible truths all the fruit necessary for your salvation; examin a little, what are the causes of such a neglect, what excuses you can bring to defend it, and what will be the consequence, should you be heedless enough to persist in your misconduct. And, if you are serious and sincere you will find upon an impartial examination;

- I. That such a conduct is extremely unjustifiable, because the causes of it are criminal:
- II. That your excuses for it are foolish because the matter of them are trivial: And
- III. That the consequences of it are terrible because big with GOD's Indignation.

"Thou therefore, gracious Saviour, who thus ineffably bestowest thyself on man, in the inviting form of food, and generously invitest all to taste of, and be fill'd with, Thee! O give us understanding to conceive thy infinit benevolence in this unequal'd favour; and grant us grace not to reject the blessing, but earnestly to thirst and hunger after it in this life, that we may never hunger in the next."

I. You, beloved, are Christians, Catholic Christians and therefore know, or ought to know, that the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist is and contains the body, blood, and divinity of JESUS CHRIST whole and intire, true GOD as well as true man. Need I then tell you that the institution of this di-

* Psalm. xlviii.

* Sermon on Corpus Christi Day.

vine Sacrament of the Eucharist (which he graciously wrought at his last supper, that you might feed upon it in this life and thus anticipate the joys of Heaven) is a favour of the highest nature; No: Surely it is needless. There are three particulars by which the intrinsic value of every gift is chiefly to be measured. The dignity of the donor, the nature of the thing given, and the use of it to the person to whom it is given. If the donor be a prince, a prelate, or otherwise great personage; every benefaction of his tho' ever so small, has an intrinsic value in it consider'd as a mark of his love or esteem: If the gift of his hand be farther considerable in itself; it is still of greater worth, whether really useful or not: But if it be even of considerable use to the person who receives it; it cannot be denied that the benefit must rise in proportion. Again there are three other considerations in every benefit, favour, or gift, which may extrinsically add to or take from the weight of the obligation it intrinsically might carry with it. Such are the intention of the giver, the manner and time of giving, and the circumstance of the person who receives. Thus if the person, who gives, does it from a motive of pride, selfishness, or other sinister view; the greatest benefits sink in their value; as they rise in it, on the contrary, if the motive be generosity, friendship, justice or other such commendable principles: In like manner if a favour be done in time, with courtesy and cheerfulness; the obligation is double: But very small when done with ostentation, haughtiness, reluctance, or too late. Finally if the person who receives a present is superior to him who offers it, or even equal; as he may be supposed likely to retaliate it, the obligation is but slender: Whereas if the person who gives it is above him, neither has, nor can have any expectations from him; and he himself neither deserves nor can return it; the favour is always considerable and the obligation arising from it very great.

Now if we consider the present which our divine redeemer has made us in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist, in all these lights, we shall be forced to confess that the favour is of the highest nature, and lays an infinit obligation of gratitude on us. To whom then, beloved, are you indebted, for this ineffable benefaction? Is it not to the great creator and redeemer of you and all mankind? And what less does he bestow upon you than himself, his precious immaculate body and blood, nay his Godhead too, and of what infinit advantage may it not be to you to feed at this divine banquet, to feed on this nouriture in the devout manner you ought? Are you not told by your blessed Saviour, that, *If any man eat of this bread he shall*

live forever. * Here then your benefactor is God himself: The gift you receive is God himself: And the use it is of to you is to raise you in the last day to an everlasting life of glory and bliss. *He who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath life everlasting and I will raise him up in the last day.* † What say you then, Christians? Can you doubt any longer of the infinit favour done you in the holy banquet you are invited to partake of? But let us consider it yet a little farther with regard to the extrinsic circumstances attending it. Who and what is this God who thus graciously condescends to bestow himself, for food on mankind? 'Tis no less than the Lord and author of all things, a supreme, immense, independant being from all eternity, so infinitely perfect and happy in himself as not to want or be able to receive any assistance or additional felicity from any thing out of himself. Consequently he could have no other intention, no other end in view than that ineffably communicative goodness which induced him at first to create us and then to redeem us, as now to feed us with himself, that we may share his eternal happiness with him. And how did he communicate himself to us? Was it in a haughty, taunting reluctant manner? No, it was with utmost graciousness, tenderness, and alacrity. With what energy did he not encourage us to receive him, by the promises he made? *He, who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him.* ‡ With what humility did he not give himself to his disciples, even washing their feet when he had done! *For whereas before he had loved his, who were in the world, to the end he loved them.* And with what cheerful gentleness did he not invite all to receive him in his blessed banquet of love! *Come to me all you, who labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.* § And all this he did at a time when mankind were in the utmost need of it, plunged as they were in a deluge of sin, ignorance and folly; when his disciples in particular were in the utmost distress, about to see him suffer, about to lose him, and about to be severely prosecuted for him. And what is still more, this he did for mankind at a time when they deserved it the least; when they were in open enmity with him, and actually laying snares for his life: And all he did for wretches infinitely beneath him, ungrateful creatures, who not only were incapable of making him any return, but even many of whom he foresaw would slight the blessing, if not sacrilegiously profane and abuse it. O inexpressible goodness of thine. My divine Redeemer! What could induce thee, O God, thus to give up thyself for food to us wretches, worms

* S. John vi. † Ibid. ‡ St. John vi.
§ St. Mark. xi.

and sinners ! Ah Christians, Christians ! If ingratitude be measured by the favours it abuses ; what and how base and black must not your ingratitude be to return so much generosity, tenderness and condescendence, with reluctance, indevotion and irreverence : Shall the God of hosts court you to receive, to be nourish'd and strengthen'd with himself ; and yet be insulted with your contempt of his invitation ? How often has he not invited you to his banquet which is prepared purposely for you ! How frequently does he send his servants, his ministers to call, to exhort, to provoke you to come to it by acquainting you that he is waiting in the holy sacraments in readiness for you ? And yet can many of you be brought to accept the invitation ? No : Some of you have your giddy pleasures in view, others are busied in the pursuit of sordid lucre, others are wedded so much to their temporal ease, as to be intirely eaten-up with spiritual sloth : And all, almost all of you have your souls so miserably fetter'd to worldly happiness, as to have no wings of wishes to lift you even to one poor feeble sigh after the joys of heaven.

And whence does all this criminal indifference arise to the holy banquet of Christ's body on earth, and to the feast of his glory above, but from as criminal an indifference to spiritual instructions of all kinds. Books are a melancholy employment, you cry ? Your directors, you complain, are too spiritualized in their common conversation with you : They are either forever teasing you about your duty ; or, if they are silent ; their very looks are a check upon your lawless diversions. Exhortations you go to : But when do you go ? When you have nothing, merely nothing, else to do ; when time hangs heavy upon your hands ; or when you want to meet with some friend, some customer, or some idle companion. To hear an exhortation on working days, tho' but once in a week, and that in the evening, when business is done, there is no persuading you ; because forsooth you are fatigued with the labour of the day ; and therefore must indulge yourselves in eating, drinking and dangerous mirth, in prophane and loose, or at best idle conversation. For that is not so fatiguing to your brain, nor wasting to your spirits, as it would be to listen quietly to spiritual instructions, and learn how to approach worthily to the holy sacraments, and reap benefit from them. But ah ! slothful Christians, why so ? 'Tis because your heads and your hearts are more bent on the flattering, fleeting, false pleasures of this life, than the solid lasting true joys of the next.

If this was not the case ; what should ever detain you from hearing the word of God on a Sunday, and receiving some spiritual instructions in a country where you stand in need of all. But on a Sun-

day, if the weather be fair ; you have a farm, you have a garden, you have some country jaunt ; or, if the season will not permit, that, you never want for some idle visit or other, to call you away from the voice of God. In a word, God invites you to him, and you answer, " I have a farm : I have a pleasure in view, and must go in pursuit of it : I pray thee, O God, hold me excused." Or else perhaps you have made an appointment to agree with some dealer about your temporal concerns ; and, without fear or shame of prophaning the day wholly consecrated to God's worship, when he calls you by the voice of his minister, to hear his word ; you bluntly reject his invitation, with an *I have excused to prove, I have business to do* of more importance to me than the learning how to adore and receive my God on earth, that I may enjoy my God forever in heaven : And therefore I pray thee, hold me excused. Or more criminal yet, a fit of spiritual sloth lays hold of you : The weather is hot, and you shall be in a sweat with walking so far ; or else it is cold, and that you do not like ; or finally it is rainy, and then you will sprinkle your cloaths, dirt your shoes and discompose your indolence : And therefore, resolved to indulge ease at home, and trifle and loiter away the evening with your wife and your children, instead of setting them good example by going to learn the duties of a good Christian, a good husband, and a good father, you dismiss the call of God with that other excuse : *I have married a wife* : I am wedded to sloth, to my ease, to luxury, and therefore cannot come.

These, these are the criminal causes of your being so remiss, so neglectful and so reluctant in accepting the gracious invitation which your divine Saviour makes you to partake of the enlivening feast of his body and blood. It is your spiritual sloth in those lesser duties which makes you so deficient in this essential obligation. And thus do you fulfill the dreadful prediction of the Holy-Ghost, that *he, who despises small things, shall fall by little and little*. " To hear the ministers of God, you cry, " there is no necessity." I say you are under a mistake. For *he who hears them, hears me, and he, who despises them, despises me*, says the Lord. " At least, you reply, there is no precept to hear them every Sunday ; and therefore no obligation ; and therefore we do not do it." This reason prevails with you, on one Sunday, to give way to spiritual sloth. The same reason, you think, holds good, the next Sunday after, and the Sunday following that ; 'till, led-on from Sunday to Sunday, you pass months, seasons, years, without hearing or enquiring into the will of your heavenly Lord : In consequence of this, void of instruction, you loiter away the days he has commanded to be kept holy to him, and spend them too often in sin,

very often in idleness, and always without fruit, without grace and without thought. Thus from the neglect of counsels you proceed to the neglect of precepts, and from omission to omission, grow harden'd in the contempt of the greatest essentials, till at length you acquire an absolute distaste for the holy food prepared for you by Christ, in the banquet of his body and blood, and a total aversion to all which is heavenly. And this sinks you into the wretched condition of those confirm'd sinners, who, as David describes them, "are estranged from God, from the very womb of their mothers, going astray as soon as born; whose hearts are affected with sin, as serpents are with poison, and their ears are as deaf to the call of God, as those of an adder which will not hearken to the voice of the charmer charming ever so wisely."

II. Ah Christians! Dearest fellow Christians! what are you about? Are you dreaming? Are you in a lethargy? Are you robb'd of your senses, or void of understanding? Alas, alas, would you were no worse. Your shameful, criminally shameful, Neglect of God's goodness to you might possibly admit of some excuse. Whereas now, awake as you are to the use of your senses and intellects, in every thing which suits the corruption of your hearts; sensible as you are made by God's ministers of the infinit blessings offer'd you in the holy banquet of the eucharist, which you are invited too: what excuse can you alledge for rejecting it, which is legitimate or capable of holding you blameless in the sight of your slighted God? "We have our pleasures to attend to, our business to take us up, or our ease and convenience to consult and indulge." And therefore cannot we so much as spare an hour on a Sunday, to hear how we may render ourselves worthy to be fed with our God, and grow strong in grace in this life, in order to feed eternally on his glory in the next. Much less can we give up all the time requisite to dispose ourselves for that delicious divine food." Alas poor things! How much are you to be pitied, if the excuse be legitimate. But ah, Christians! Can you be so senseless as to imagin that excuses of this nature will hold good? Absolute sickness, I know, will be admitted as an excuse: Your health is concern'd: The preservation of your life for God's sake, is a prior duty to that of going to exhortations, to spiritual instructions, and even to Christ himself in the blessed Sacrament. And therefore in such cases he graciously condescends to be brought to you; because you are then under a moral impossibility of coming to him. So if your neighbour be sick, imprisoned, or otherwise in distress; and cannot do without your personal assistance; you are dispensed from your attendance on God, at the feast of his flesh

or his word. The duty of fraternal charity takes place: And your leaving God, for the sake of God, will not be imputed to you as a crime but a virtue: In as-much as you cannot receive God, or listen to God in the voice of his ministers, without breaking through a prior moral obligation of charity; and therefore are to be deem'd under a moral impossibility of answering his call, nay, you are absolutely not call'd. In a word, whenever you are under moral impossibility of this or any other kind, which you bring not upon yourselves; you may and ought to excuse yourselves for the time, from the divine banquet you are invited to, or from the opportunities of learning how to approach to it: And you need be under no apprehensions of being excluded from it forever; provided, as soon as the obstacle is removed, you lay hold on the first invitation which is made you. But all other excuses, I fear, will rather aggravate your guilt, than render you blameless in the sight of your Almighty Benefactor. If you are resolved however, Christians to build your hopes on them, let me make your apology for you.

Come, gracious Saviour! Forgive these thy creatures the neglect, as well of the holy delicious feast thou invitest them to, as of the means leading them to it. *I pray thee hold them excused.* Here is one whom thou hast created to enjoy thee forever: And, because, through the frailty of his nature, he was unable of himself to reach to the banquet of thy glory in the next world; thou didst graciously vouchsafe to anticipate it in this, by giving-up thyself to be his food under a familiar form; and hast sent thy ministers to invite him to the feast: He thanks thee for thy invitation; but hopes thou wilt hold him excused, because he has a farm, a garden, a country-jarrit, or some other pleasure, he prefers to any thou canst invite him to. I then thy servant, thy minister, pray thee in his name hold him excused. Ah! What say'st thou, Lord? *None of those men, who are of this stamp, shall taste thy supper.* But why so, angry Lord? Didst not thou pursue the pleasures of the earth, while thou wast in it? No, no, beloved: Christ came suffering into the world, and suffering went out of it. *It was necessary for Christ to suffer, and so to enter into his glory.* And there is no other way for his disciples to enter into it after him. Pleasures are like a window, a bye-way: And he, who enters in by the window and not by the door, is a thief and a felon; and, as such, will be forever excluded the banquet of his glory.

Well then, dear Lord, since I plead in vain for this man of pleasure; since thou wilt not admit my apology for him; hear me at least in the behalf of this other. He is a man of affairs: The six days thou hast given him to labour in, and to do all he has to do, are not enough: His oxen are actually

to the plough: He has an appointment of business, a job to agree for, a customer to wait upon; and therefore cannot wait upon thee to receive thee, nor wait on thy minister to be instructed how to approach worthily to thee: *I pray thee therefore hold him excused.* Alas what? still angry, my God! What! *shall none even of these men taste of thy supper?* Ah! Christians, how just is not this. Know you not the Grace of JESUS CHRIST, as St. Paul says, *that for you he was made poor, whereas he was rich?* How unworthy then are not you of sitting at the banquet of his glory; if, for fear of becoming poor, or for the sake of becoming rich, you despise the banquet of his grace: If you will not so much as listen to his ministers, whom he sends to invite you to it.

But still, all-bounteous sovereign, let me petition you once more in the behalf of another: And if thy equity can admit my plea; O! dismiss me not with the disgrace of a third refusal. This one whom neither pleasure nor business detains from answering thy call. He would gladly prepare himself for thy gracious feast of grace, and gladly learn of thy ministers how to assist at it worthily; if his ease and leisure would permit: But he *has married a wife and cannot come.* He has the peace of his family, and his own ease to consult. He has a wife and children: He must humour the one with false fondness, and play with the others out of mistaken tenderness. By approaching to thee and to thy ministers, he might be strengthen'd and instructed to behave like a Christian to both: might learn to instruct and be an example to both. But then to do this there are difficulties to surmount. His wife is a protestant, or but a lukewarm Catholic; his children are humourful, and untaught to be otherwise. And therefore, till he used them to it, the one would be sullen, and the others would be peevish; should he leave them to flee to thee: And that would disturb his peace. Besides it would quite discompose him to leave the fit of indolence he is in: He might take heat or catch cold; he might disoblige his cloaths; he might, in short, break through the whole oeconomy of self-indulgence. And that, Lord, would be hard for a man to do, once a week, for the sake of feeding on the bread of angels, who has been labouring all the week for common bread. *I pray thee then this once hold him excused.* Alas, loving Saviour, why lookest thou so stern? Ah! Cease those angry frowns, or I sink beneath thy indignation. I hear thee, Lord, and well I know thy words: *I am in labours even from my youth.** I know thou wast, I know, Lord, that thou didst never indulge thy ease. But ah! Remember thou art God, and we but creatures. Can we then do like thee? Yes, Christians, yes; or else he had never told us: *† If any man come to me,*

* Psalm. lxxxvii.

“and hateth not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, nay and his own life besides; he cannot be my disciple” † Vain therefore is every apology which I can bring to hold you blameless in the sight of God. No longer then expect that I should plead in your behalf; or find me better arguments. For, till you do, what can I expect but that disheartening answer: *None of these men, who were call'd, shall taste my supper.*

What say you, Christians? You have a better excuse still in reserve? If you have no apology for not approaching to the holy Eucharist? you have at least for not endeavouring to learn from Christ's Ministers, how to approach to it worthily? You cannot go to hear the word of God without some expence? † I will be expected, that you should give your mite towards the assistance of the poor: And that forsooth you cannot well afford? Your circumstances are but narrow: Your family is large; your income small; in a word, you are poor yourselves: And charity begins at home? But ah Christians! What an ill-judged frugal fit is this? What an illusion are you under? Is it the expence you grudge? No. Let but an idle friend, a vain diversion, or a fervid purpose seize you in the minute; and what idle expences shall you not run into without a grudge, without a thought: While every penny lent to God, by giving to the poor, draws blood from every vessel of your hearts! And why, but because your luxury has no share in it; and therefore as void of faith as of charity, you deem it thrown-away? But ah, dearest Fellow-Christians! Deceive not yourselves, by building on any excuses like these; which, instead of holding you guiltless, can only add to your guilt and aggravate the punishment which will be the fatal consequence of your neglect.

* III. Our divine Saviour has sufficiently apprised us of the fatal consequences of neglecting the divine food of his sacred body and blood, by telling us in the sixth of St. John: *Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood; you shall have no life in you.* It cannot be supposed, that Christ spoke of the natural life resulting from the mere union of soul and body. For that the wicked enjoy often and equally in common with the good, by the divine permission of God, who *maketh his sun to shine on the just and the unjust.* † The life then he speaks of is the life of grace, that life by which we are heirs to his glory. If then, Christians, you reject the blessing offer'd you of feeding upon the delicious regale of Christ's body and blood; you have no life of grace in you: You are dead to him in this world, and consequently are blotted out of the

† St. Luke xiv. † St. Matt. v.

book of everlasting life; are disinherited of the glory you were made heirs to in the next; and banish'd forever from the face of the Lord, you will never be raised-up, in the last day, to the possession of his kingdom; but be sunk into wretched eternal unutterable misery. You have no other chance then, no other reasonable grounds to build your hopes of a happy glorious resurrection upon, but the partaking of the banquet of God's glory, by anticipation, in the sacred feast he has prepared for you in the adorable sacrament of his body.

And yet to render even this a food of life to you, you have no other way than to approach it worthily. For, as St. Paul justly warns you, "He, who eateth and drinketh unworthily of it, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself." * The unworthy reception then of the holy Eucharist is attended with no less a judgment than eternal damnation in the other world, besides many and grievous curses in this. For to this sacrilegious rashness may be attributed many of those sicknesses, miseries and catastrophes which befall mankind. Ask not, "why such-a-one is sick; such-a-one feeble, in the flower of his youth; and such-a-one suddenly carried-off in the vigour and prime of life, by some unforeseen accident?" Alas! It may be the effect, the curse of a bad communion. *Therefore are there among you, perhaps, many weak and feeble, and many sleep the sleep of death, as St. Paul told the Corinthians.* †

And how shall you learn to shun all these evils, by approaching to the feast your divine Saviour invites you to, and approaching to it in the manner you ought, but by listening to his ministers and seeking instruction from them? If you are neglectful of the means; what wonder is it, you should miss of the end? If you neglect and will not listen to the voice of God's ministers; if you will seek idle pretexts to avoid coming to them, or following to the blessed feast they call and offer to lead you to; what wonder is it you should be neglectful of the end itself, and the Lord of it? If there is a precept to urge you to communion; there needs none to

* 2 Cor. xi.

† Ibid.

urge you to the means which lead to it: The end of the law includes all the means which are requisite to fulfill it. And therefore is it, that to approach to the body of your God, you are not commanded to hear the word of God: Because it is included in the former commandment, and therefore need not be repeated.

Let me then undeceive you, Christians, the hearing the word of God is not so unnecessary as you conceive it to be. It is necessary to bring you acquainted with God: It is necessary to lead you to him; and necessary to remind you of, and fit you for approaching to him. In a word, your whole salvation in great measure depends upon your diligence in this particular. You will never hunger after the delightful banquet of his grace and glory; if you do not first yearn after the seasoning of his holy word. Your appetite will decay; your taste for spiritual nourishment will pall; your strength will decay; and all the life of grace will desert you: The consequence of which will be, that you will forever be excluded from the delicious and everlasting regale of his glory: For none of those who were call'd, as my text says, and listen'd not, shall taste of this supper. Be diligent then, Christians, in attending to the word of God. Let no idle excuses of worldly pleasure, profit or ease, draw you away from listening and learning how to approach worthily to your God in the holy Eucharist. Let no earthly attachments keep you from uniting yourself intimately with your Lord. Remember the encouragement he gives you to receive him, and to receive him often and worthily. "He, who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me" and I in him." * If then you abide in him by the grace of that divine sacrament in this life; you already have, by anticipation, life everlasting in your possession. And "He will raise you up in the last day," to that fulness of glory which his saints enjoy with him in heaven; Which God of his infinite mercy grant you: *In the name, &c.*

* St. John vi.

S E R M O N

On the Third SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. LUKE xv. 7.

I say to you, that there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner who doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.

IF you give attention, beloved, to these words of my text; you cannot but remark in them, two very obvious truths: The one full of consolation and joy; the other full of terror and dismay: The one sufficient

sufficient to encourage the vilest of sinners to place a confidence in God's mercy, the moment he is resolved on a reform; the other capable of disheartening the boldest of mortals, in possession of reflection, from daring to become a sinner. The comfortable truth, which may embolden every sinner, let his offences be ever so heinous, to seek mercy from God by repentance, is, that he has to do with a God, who delights in mercy; a God, who, when offended can be appeased; a God more desirous of forgiving than of punishing; a God, in a word, who is no acceptor of persons; who excludes no species, no circumstances, and no number of offences from the reach of his mercy; and whose forgiveness is to be obtain'd on the simple easy terms of a serious and sincere repentance. O my God! Was it not enough, that thou did'st shew thyself such by saying, that *Thou wilt not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live?* Was it not excess of complacency in thee (after so often inviting sinners, in vain, to repent and accept thy forgiveness) to urge them to it by promising to return to them, if they would return to thee? Must thy merciful condescendence carry thee still farther, to court them to be forgiven, by telling them, that it would afford thee joy and pleasure? By assuring them without exception, that *there shall be joy in heaven upon any one sinner who doth penance?* O the comfortable truth! What greater encouragement can the greatest of sinners require to seek mercy from God by repentance?

And yet, beloved, what mortal with his senses about him, would dare to exchange his state of innocence, his state of grace for that of a sinner; did he seriously reflect on this one terrifying truth, that, by consenting to sin, he renders his salvation extremely precarious; because his repentance will not only be doubtful but highly improbable? For, alas, what reasonable hopes can a poor frail man form to himself of repenting, when the grace of God shall desert him, or rather he shall desert the grace of God; which alone can enable him to do what is good? What ground, I say, has he to build such a presumption upon, considering what very great odds are against him? Upon the most moderate computation. They are no less than ninety-nine to one. Else why does our divine Saviour tell us, that the joy, which the conversion of one sinner creates in heaven, is *more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance?* Is not the reason plain, that there are ninety-nine saved by shunning the occasions of committing sin, for one who is saved by repenting of sin? And why so, but because there is, at least, ninety-nine times to one, less difficulty to avoid falling into sin, while we have the help of grace to avoid it, than there is to repent of sin,

when, after abusing that Grace, we are left to ourselves. O what a terrifying truth! Who can think on it and sin?

Hence then, beloved, I gather two infallible consequences, which will make the whole oeconomy of this discourse. The first is, that no Sinner has reason to despair of God's mercy, who has the heart to repent of his sin; because *there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner, who doth penance;* And the Second, that no just man has room to commit sin with hopes of repenting, when he actually has the assistance of grace to avoid it; because the joy upon a penitent sinner, is *more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance.* Both these reflections, Christians, I would have you seriously weigh: In this appears the levity of presumption; in that the stupidity of despair. To arm you therefore against both, I shall labour at present to convince you;

- I. That nothing is so little to be depended upon as future repentance, before sinning:
And
- II. That nothing is so much to be desired and depended upon as present repentance after it.

"O sovereign wisdom, whose sacred truths I utter! Give thou such unction to my words as may enable me to melt the hearts of all here present: That such of them as feel the blessed warmth of grace within them, may never consent to part with it; and, if there be one sinner here, I may, by bringing him to thee, contribute to a festival in Heaven."

I. A just man then, that is, a Christian in a state of justification and grace cannot be too much terrified at every the least appearance of sin: And no purposes or hopes of repentance can suffice to lessen his terrors; if he has his salvation at heart, as he must have to be just. "But why? Why may not a man sin, who resolves to repent? Repentance itself is good: else there would not be joy for it in Heaven. If then it be good it is desirable; and if it be desirable, why may not we sin to obtain it?" Hold, deluded Christians, hold. In the first place, the very laws of nature forbid you to do evil, that good may come from it. Secondly, granting repentance to be a good; it is good only as it is necessary. And, alas, it is at best but a melancholy good; if we consider the cause which produces it, and the dangers and difficulties of acquiring it, when necessary. Such of you therefore, beloved, as are in a state of grace; if you are in your senses too, will find nothing in the hopes of repentance to encourage you to run the hazard of
wanting

wanting it; because, while you are yet free from sin, there is nothing you have so little reason to depend upon as future repentance.

The reasons, beloved, why you cannot depend upon repenting, if you should sin, are Three. First: It is very uncertain, whether or not you will have time for repentance, when you have sinn'd. Secondly, could you be sure of having sufficient time after sinning; it is highly improbable, that you will have a will to repent. And Thirdly: Should you have ever so much time and good will to repent, you will still find it a matter of extremely great difficulty to obtain a perfect repentance.

You are all of you certain, beloved, that you must die. For the truth of this I appeal to your own fears: I appeal to melancholy experience: I appeal to the nature of your beings. For *Dust you are and to Dust you will return*. And yet certain as you are of death, is there any thing more uncertain than the time of your death? Where is the man, who can show me an authentic lease of his life? Or, to come closely to the point, Where is the mortal, who can give me an assurance, in any one minute of his life, that he shall not die the next? What reasonable encouragement then can the hopes of repentance give you to sin, beloved; you, who can have no reasonable assurance of living to repent? The Lord will come to demand your souls of you, *as a thief in the night*, when you least expect him. So far therefore from having any reasonable Assurance of living to repent, you have the greatest reason, every minute when tempted to sin, to apprehend that you shall not live. For when are you the most likely to die but when you expect it the least? And it is very plain, that, whenever you are tempted to sin, you are in the least apprehensions of death: That then is the time in which you have the most reason to be apprehensive of it. Because, you are very sure, on one side, that the Lord will come; and, on the other side, you are as sure, that he will come when you expect him the least. Again, when is a man in less apprehensions of death than when he is the most sensible of life? And there is no time in which we are so sensible of life as the present. For it is the now, the present now alone in which we can feel that we have life: Every present hour then is the most likely time of the Lord's calling upon us to demand our life from us. Because in the hour we think the least of his coming he will be the most likely to come. Ah Christians! What reason have you then at any time to depend upon having leisure for repentance, if you should fall into sin; since the moment of your death is always so probably near at hand?

But alas you are tempted to sin, the temptation is pleasing and your own corruption tells you, that

these ungrateful truths are only pious speculations. "Death, you say, seldom comes without some warning; and for little notice it gives, there will always be time for repentance. There are few persons die so suddenly as not to have time to say, *Lord have mercy on me*." Ah deluded mortal. Are you in your senses, who reason thus? I will suppose, that, God being infinitely good, it is possible tho' highly improbable, that a whole life of Iniquity may be wiped-off with one dying *Lord have mercy on me a sinner*. But what certainty have you, that, you will not be one of the unhappy few who shall not have the minute's leisure to utter it? What promise have you, that you shall have that gracious warning given you, which you are base enough to forfeit by presuming on it? *Ananias* and his wife *Sapphira*, as we read in the acts of the apostles, had some regard for their salvation? and, perhaps, more than any-one here. Have any of you sold your estate or effects, beloved, to distribute in charitable uses? Alas you can scarce be prevail'd upon to bestow, without a grudge, a few pence, out of your superfluities, on the poor and the needy? Whereas they bestow'd a considerable sum at once which they threw at the feet of the apostles. But alas they lost all the benefit of their charity by consenting to one sin. And yet they hoped, as you might do, to save themselves by future repentance; or they would never have given charity at all. And nevertheless they were disappointed of their hopes, as you may be, if you follow their example. They were sensible of being alive and in good health and therefore little expected that the time of repentance would fail them. But ah it did fail them! They no sooner committed the sin but they fell dead at the feet of St. *Peter*: And thus the Lord came to them, *as a thief in the night*, when they least expected his coming. And why may not the same be your unhappy case, beloved; should you be senseless enough to tread in their steps? What do you deserve more favourable of God than those mistaken creatures did? Is your rebellion against God less deserving sudden vengeance than that of *Core* *Dathan* and *Abiram* against *Moses*? And yet neither they nor any of the unhappy wretches, who were involved in their destruction, thought, the minute before, of being cut-off the next. *Pharao* and his army saw not the destruction they ran into, till the moment it overwhelmed them. The detestable Inhabitants of *Sodom* were under as little apprehensions of death, as you can be at present, till the very instant it seized them. And without running so far back, the very last man who died suddenly, in the vigor of life, had no more fears, the minute before he expired, than That would be his last; than you have, at this very time, or than you may have at any other time when

when you are tempted to sin. And yet he did die; and died when he had the least apprehensions of death: And so may you, beloved. You may die, the very instant after you have committed the sin you are tempted to; if not in the very act of sinning. Nay you may be taken in the very minute you give consent to commit it, before you have time to reap the sensual pleasure you purpose to yourselves in the execution of your criminal design. And what a folly is it not to run such a risk.

I never think of this but it calls me to mind the distressful condition of soul poor *Jonathán* was in, when he saw himself upon the point of being sentenced to death for breaking the fast which was enjoined by his father *Saul* to the whole army of *Israelites*. The thought of death seem'd not so terrible to him as the reflection on the trivialness of the cause. It was not for making a meal, for taking his fill; but for the bare, the simple taste of a little honey he was to pay-down the price of life. *I have but tasted a little honey and so I shall die.** Ah what a melancholy reflection! What exquisite remorse will it not give you for ever, beloved; should you incur eternal death for the bare taste of sin! Should you, in hopes of repentance, be deluded into a criminal consent, and be cut-off in the very moment you give your consent; what more will you have of the deceitful honey, of the false pleasure, you propose to yourselves, than the faint taste of it in expectation? And can that be worth pursuing at the hazard of feeling the eternal sting of the bitter bitter reflection: *I did but taste a little honey and so I die?* Ah Christians! Christians! reflect a little on this and tell me: Is it not very uncertain, whether or not you will have time to repent, if you should sin? Have you then any encouragement to sin which you can less depend upon than future repentance?

You will tell me, perhaps, that I am talking of extraordinary cases. Well then, let them pass for such; and, granting them to be very uncommon cases, let me, for argument's sake, suppose you not liable to them. "Death then, (say you) generally speaking, has it's fore-runners, to warn those, it is approaching to visit, of it's being near at hand." And then surely it is time enough to repent. For "repentance is never too late." What Christians! Is repentance never too late? Heaven grant you may never find it so. Death has but three sorts of messengers of it's approach which I know of. Sudden accidents, infirmity and old age. Sudden accidents, such as the crush of ruins, strokes of lightning, falls, desperate wounds, and nameless other casualties, are indeed too frequent and too certain harbingers of our approaching end. But, alas, of what use are they? Death comes so close upon the heel of them; or they-themselves throw the mind

* 1. Kings xiv.

into such a disorder, that we are mostly disabled from receiving the benefit, or laying hold of the advantage of the warning. This man has fractured his skull; that man has lost his speech, and a third is in exquisite pain. Talk then to them of repenting of their sins, and exhort them to prepare themselves for their approaching end? Alas! To what purpose? one understands not what you say: His intellects are too much confounded to have a thought, much more to have a will to repent; and another either can give you no answer, or, if he can, "Ah! the doctor, the surgeon, (he cries) seek relief for my torments: Procure me a little ease; and then talk to me of repentance." In short, the generality of mortal accidents, if they allow a man time to repent, seldom allow him presence of mind or tranquillity of heart enough to make use of that time. And O! How often does it happen, that all the warning, which such casualties afford, is no better; no longer, than that which a man would give, who should write you a letter of notice of his coming and bring it you himself.

"But this, you'll cry, is returning to the old story, these are extraordinary cases, and we do not care to think ourselves liable to these. A man could never walk the streets in comfort, if he was always to walk in fear of the houses falling about his ears." Well then, beloved, you shall have it your own way: We will talk of extraordinary no more. But what do you say to sickness, and infirmities? These, I hope, you will allow to be no uncommon cases. These are the second sort of fore-runners of death. But are these likely to be of any more use to you; should you become slaves of sin? Ah! No; not a jot. Let us but pay a visit to a sick sinner for once, and trace him through the progress of his leisurely illness; and you will be practically convinced of it. You are too careful of yourselves to make a frequent practice of such charitable visits in person. Follow me then, at least, in imagination, to some sick sinner's apartment. One trial or two of it cannot much hurt you. See then this inconsiderate mortal. 'Tis one who committed sin with a design to repent of it before death: But ah! What an idle presumptuous design was it not? It is true, he has had time enough for repentance, but what can time avail, where the will is wanting? Death has sent him notice of it's approach: But there is no persuading him to take the warning seriously. Well, my friend, we cry: How are you? "I am a good deal out of order, I have a violent cold."—Alas! I am sorry for it: It is a dangerous thing: Shall I inform your spiritual director? "My director! For what? Why 'tis nothing but a cold."—Nothing but a cold! What would you have? A pest? A plague? What is worse than a cold? Priest

thee then let me go for your director, while you are well enough to make use of him. "Pooh! The man talks wildly, (thinks the patient) my director will enjoin me to quit sin; and that I am not disposed to do yet. I am not so bad, but I may sin again. Sin has not forsaken me, and why should I forsake it? Send for my director? Ah! He will expect me to repent. He will command me to put away this concubine; to give-over this fraudulent traffic, to leave this habit of drinking; to do penance; to frequent the holy sacraments; to fast, and pray, and what not? And all this is surely too much to submit to for a cold."—Well, but you may grow worse. "That is true: I may and I may not; But if I should; it will be time enough then to think of my director." Ah Christians! Christians! What can it avail a sinner in such a disposition to have a long notice of his approaching death?

But come: Let us visit him again: Some months are past: His distempers are grown inveterate; and the danger increases: Perhaps he may now be in a better disposition.—Well, my friend, how goes it? "But poorly, very poorly."—Alas! You are in a fever, and a high one too: Why you spit blood: You have a strong hectic upon you: You waste by swift degrees: Ah! for Heaven's sake then, send to your director. "There is time enough yet: I shall be better bye-and-bye."—You renew your instances: The answer is still, "there is time enough."—Renew them again from day to day, and from week to week: "It is still time enough."—But ah! What mean those cold sweats, these frequent faintings, this motionless pulse? Alas you are in imminent utmost danger. For JESUS CHRIST's sake, for your own soul's sake, let your director be call'd. "Away: I cannot talk to him now: My head aches: I am faint: It will waste my spirits: What news is there stirring?—Ah! What can it import to you, to know the news of this world, who are standing upon the verge of another? Shall I read to you? "No, I am sleepy"—Shall I pray by you? "No, it will disturb me."—Shall I then, dear brother, dear husband, dear father, dear friend, shall I send for your director against you awake? "No, I have not settled my affairs, I must make my will first."—Well, be it so. Come, your will is made, your worldly affairs are settled: Answer me then once more, shall I send for your director? "Yes, you may desire him to come to-morrow."—Ah fool! fool! wretched fool! *This night*, this very night, *shall thy soul be required of thee*.

Look, beloved, look on the deluded mortal, and see or fancy, at least, you see the increasing symptoms of his speedy departure: View the change, the dreadfully surprising change which present death

has wrought in him; and, if you can for pity, hear his despairing groans. "O my director, my director: O that I could be but saved!"—Come! Compose yourself, your director is gone for: He is coming. In the mean time trust in the mercy of your gracious GOD. "Ah too long have I presumptuously trusted in his mercy: Too long not to expect now the rigour of his justice."—Well: Repent then, and ask pardon. "Ah! 'Tis too late, too late." No sure. Ask the multitude of Christians now in health, and they will tell you: It is never too late to repent. "Alas! I ever thought so till now: But now I think, nay I know, quite otherwise."—Hold! Your director is come: He will inform you better. But ah, he comes too late! The unhappy creature can talk no more; his speech forsakes him; the priest calls on him in vain for repentance; the agony of death seizes fast hold on him; and his eye-balls fix'd, his clay-cold limbs, and livid lips, all shew, that he is upon the point of verifying GOD's terrible threat to such as dare offend him with the presumptuous hopes of repenting, when they have done: *You have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. And therefore behold! I also will laugh at your destruction and will mock when your fear cometh.*

Well, beloved! How do you like this prospect of future repentance: Is there any dependance think you to be had on it; though we should have time and warning given us to do it? And O! How many instances of this kind have not I been a melancholy witness of!

What say you, Christians? If you should sin, you would not delay repentance till sickness overtook you? How are you sure of that? "We would repent while in health?" Alas! Where is the probability of that? It is mighty likely indeed, that you, who, while you have grace in your possession, will not make use of it to assist you against falling into sin, should repent of sin at all when you have voluntarily forfeited that grace. But, perhaps, you have so often sinn'd and repented, and sinn'd and repented again, that you fancy you have quite got a knack of repentance. Alas! What sort of repentance is it? It is, I fear, mere mock sorrow, and such a-one as can only serve to harden you in sin, and render repentance more difficult to you to acquire, when old age, the third fore-runner of death, shall give you notice of it's approach. And this is the reason why so many receive no benefit from the warning which grey-hairs bring along with them. Their evil habits are grown inveterate, and they have gone on so long, not pacifying their consciences with one sincere repentance, but lulling and hushing it with so many sham ones; that the older they grow the stronger their inclination is

to sin, and the less they are disposed for repentance. View this old man. What is he the better for being old? The power of sinning has long since taken leave of him, and yet so faithful a servant is he to his old master Satan, that he cannot resolve to quit the affection to sin. Drunkenness he has confessed, perhaps, a hundred times; and yet, tho' he cannot swill as much liquor, in quantity, as he formerly could, his good-will to it daily increases. He is a compleater miser than ever: And yet he has often had scruples about his injustices, and been sorry for them; and so sorry as to resolve on restitution; but how has he effected it? Why, the older he grows, the more covetous he becomes, and he is daily hoarding-up fresh matter for the restitution he designs to make in charitable uses at his death. His lust and luxury with all his repentance take daily, deeper root: Yet he is sorry for them and designs to amend; but when, when are all these fine purposes to be executed? He already begins to doat: His memory fails him: His strength is gone: He has but one knee out of the grave and both feet in it. Ah Christians! Christians! He will repent too, but when it is too late, like that other sick man. Yes: It is highly probable, that a man shall repent of his sins at a time when he is past being sensible of them; or, if he is, is only sensible of an inveterate attachment to them: It is, I say, highly probable that such a man should repent at his last minutes, whom no persuasions, no calls, no opportunities could prevail upon to repent while the habit of sin was young and weak upon him, and his faculties strong and lively? Ah! of what benefit then is the warning of old-age likely to prove to such as neglect the opportunities of grace in their youth. Tell me then, beloved, do you think you are safe in sinning with a dependence upon future repentance. Alas no: You will think quite otherwise; if you reflect on the difficulty of obtaining a true repentance.

Though you should be sure of a long life to repent in at leisure; and though you could promise yourselves the will to repent some time or other; the difficulty of repenting as you should do is so great that it is at least ninety-nine to one that you may not make use of the time, nor obtain your wish. Perfect repentance is a sincere and hearty sorrow, for having offended God, for God's sake: Which must essentially be accompanied with not only an aversion to sin but to the occasions of it. Now to bring you thus to God, you will stand in need of the grace of God. And that grace of God must be of an extraordinary nature. For it has the double task to perform of conquering the obstinacy of the heart, and then turning it to God. To do which is required no less than a miracle even of grace itself. But how alas can you hope to come

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at this grace, which is not to be obtain'd but by the intervention of another grace? And you alas who cannot resolve to resist sin, while you have grace to assist you in resisting it, can you flatter yourself that you will have strength enough to leave it, when you shall be without any grace?

But a perfect contrition, you will tell me, is not requisite to salvation. No, neither will you pretend to aim at it. Alas more is the pity. Still you are sure, that your own self-love or your natural cowardice will lead you, one time or other, to be sorry for your sins, through the desire of eternal happiness or fear of everlasting wretchedness: And that with confession will do. What! Your self-love? your cowardice? Ah! What self-love can you have to depend upon, who will lay your whole Salvation at stake for one transient pleasure? What cowardice can you rely upon in yourselves, who dare risk eternal damnation for the meer imaginary taste of pleasure, in one criminal consent which you may not live to enjoy the wicked satisfaction of? But be it as you say. To obtain that attrition, and to have the heart to confess and do penance, you will still want grace. And that grace is not to be had without prayer. Now what assurance have you that you will be able to pray, when you are left to yourselves? For no-one can even call upon the sacred name of Jesus, unless the lord gives him the grace and the heart so to do. You see then, beloved, that there is no small difficulty for a sinner to obtain Repentance, tho' he should have the time and the will to acquire it. Upon the whole, the odds against you, when without grace, are so great; that, while you have grace, you cannot make too good a use of it to avoid sin. For if we had time to run a division upon all the hazards dangers and difficulties you will meet with in such a situation to hinder your repenting; you would find, that the odds against you are at least ninety-nine to one: And therefore, that you can with no sensible safety exchange the state of grace I hope you are in for that of a sinner; because nothing is so little to be depended upon by you at present as future repentance.

II. And yet, beloved, there is nothing so much to be desired or depended upon as present repentance, by such as have been already unhappy enough to fall into sin. If then there is any-one here so miserable as to be involved in mortal sin, let him not despair, let him not persist in it, but let him repent. Let him seize the gracious leisure which is yet allow'd him. Let him catch the flying grace which is still proffer'd him by my mouth. Repent, O sinner, repent. It is the only remedy you now have. Fly each to the throne of your offended God, and with the humble publican cry-out

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for mercy. Cry-out mightily: *Lord be merciful to me a sinner.* Repair to the holy Sacraments, confess your sins, do penance and be sorry for what you have done. *Return to me, says the Lord, and I will return to you.* All the satisfaction the Lord requires of you is, that you should repent, and forsake your evil courses. Can you then refuse the easy terms he offers you? Can you have any objection against repentance? Consider, beloved, that it is absolutely necessary, it is sovereignly useful and always infallible where it is sincere.

It is necessary to justify the mercy of God in saving you. You have offended his majesty and abused his grace: It concerns his justice therefore not to admit you to pardon and mercy till you do something to deserve it; and what less can you do to deserve mercy, than to be sorry for what you have done amiss, and sin no more. Had the cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* done this while they had time; nay, had but a small number of their inhabitants done it for the rest; they had all (horrid as their crimes were) been saved from the wrath which overtook them. *As I live, says the Lord, I will not the death of a sinner; but, rather, that he be converted and live.* It was repentance which restored the criminal *David* to the grace and favour of his offended Maker. It was by repentance that the *Magdalen* acquired the enviable degree of love and tenderness which Christ express'd for her. And had *Judas* too, even *Judas*, repented as he should have done; even he might have risen to a degree of grace as great as that of any of his fellow apostles. Alas! He did repent; but how did he repent? Not with a repentance of love, of hope, of tenderness; but with a repentance of despair, a repentance infinitely more criminal than his very treachery to Christ. Ah sinner! Sinner! unhappy sinner! Be not thus dismay'd. Tho' you have hitherto

follow'd that wretch in your treachery and ingratitude to God, by selling his grace for a sinful satisfaction, follow him not in his frantic repentance. No; hope in the mercies of your good God and call upon him for forgiveness. Remember the reception he gave to the penitent Psalmist, to the humble Publican, to the repenting sinner who wash'd his feet with her tears; and, as you have outstript them in what they did amiss, grudge not to equal them in what they did right. You see the great usefulness of repentance in the fruits they reap'd from it. And what should hinder you from reaping the same fruits? The efficacy of a sincere repentance is always infallible, always certain. No sinner is excepted from the benefit of God's mercy, who will but recur to it in time. "Come now, O sinner, says the Lord in Isaiah, come let us reason together. Wash you, make you clean, put away your evil doings from before my eyes, and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Do so then, O Christians: Throw yourselves on the mercies of God, hide yourselves in the wounds of your dear Redeemer, repent, do penance and sin no more: That as you have given more displeasure to heaven by one mortal sin than ninety-nine just men have done by their venial offences; so seeing the miracle of your conversion, and considering the odds which were against you, the hazards, the dangers, the difficulties you have surmounted in it, there may be more joy in heaven upon every-one of you who doth penance, than upon ninety-nine just, who have none of those difficulties to surmount because they need not penance. Thus shall your repentance be rewarded with a perfect forgiveness, and your forgiveness be crown'd with a confirmation of grace in this life, and a certainty of glory in the next. Which *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Fourth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. LUKE v. r.

And it came to pass, when the multitudes press'd upon him to hear the word of God.

THERE was a time then, beloved, when the word of God had charms enough in it, to attract men to hear it. It did not always appear so dry, insipid and void of relish, but that some men

could find matter of pleasure in it. Nay what have I said? Why did I not rather say, that it has been found so richly full of the useful and delightful, that whole multitudes were induced to run after it? And why then (ah! why?) is mankind grown so shamefully indifferent to it now? Is it, perhaps, that it has lost any part of it's intrinsic value? Has it not in itself the same real virtue and relish it ever had? In

In a word, is it not now every way the same, it ever was? Yes, beloved! The word of God is still the same; but men are not the same. Once they had ears and organs to receive the sacred sounds of truth. Then even *Jews*, perfidious *Jews*, the enemies of Christ, who scorn'd his power, and despised his person, still found such true delight in God's instructive voice, that they could leave their houses, families, affairs and all, to follow the very man they hated, *to hear from him the word of God*. Nor was it one-by-one, they went to him, or in small parties, but in whole crouds, prodigious crouds. Vast multitudes, without consulting ease or safety, unstay'd by fears of wanting seats or elbow-room, jostle, push-on, and, partly stifling, partly stifled, press eagerly on one-another, and even upon Christ; anxious to learn the Almighty's will from him. And these were *Jews*, incredulous perverse and stiff-neck'd *Jews*.

Who then could think, if sad experience did not urge him to it, that Christians (men who pretend to love, profess and follow Christ) should be so wretchedly indifferent, as we see they are, to listen to God's holy word, still rich with heavenly knowledge, still big as ever with the fruits of grace; and still the same in value as it ever was? Who could believe, that these can scarce vouchsafe, to step one street beside their way, one door beyond their own; that they can scarce prevail upon themselves to give-up one short hour in a week; and by no means can sacrifice one pleasure, one trivial engagement, to the hearing what their all-gracious sovereign, has to offer for their good? O the infatuation! What shall we impute it to? If Christians, to hear the word of God, must needs submit to all those hardships which the *Jews* encounter'd: If they must take long journeys for it; expose themselves to standing long amidst a pressing populace, without a place of shelter from the rains, the heats and other inconveniences which might surprise them; If they must run the risk of being bruised and trampled-on, by an unruly multitude, and all still with the uncertainty of getting near enough the preacher, to reap the benefit of what he says? I should not wonder much at those who stay'd away. Rather should I wonder more at those who went to hear him, undaunted by these difficulties. For surely all who know the Christians of our age, can never expect such zealous warmth from them; however right it was in unbelieving *Jews*. The *Jews* indeed were always sensual lovers of their earthly ease and pleasure; yet they could find a pleasure too in heavenly subjects, and could sometimes give-up the former for the latter. But our modern Christians have so refined upon *Jewish* luxury, that nothing will go down with them, but what is carnal, merely carnal. Talk to them of some idle show, some silly

pageantry, some mountebank, or some enthusiastic impostor; and no ties, no business, no engagements, sacred or prophane, have power to restrain their eagerness: No hardships, dangers or fatigues, are able to deter them from mingling with the rudest mob, to gratify their senseless curiosity. But tell them of being crouded at a Sermon: Tell them of wanting ease or elbow-room; and priests may preach the word of God to benches, or never preach at all, for aught they care. For then forsooth they find themselves so weak; they are so naturally delicate, that every fancied inconvenience affrights them: And crouds are excellent excuses to omit necessary duty. Well! let us grant, that, in those old forgotten times when priests had crouds to preach to, the excuse was good. But now what plea can be alledged in favour of the strange indifference which you, beloved, shew to God's instructive word; but that you have no ears for aught which is not earthly. Have you not, in every place where God's enlightening word is preach'd, room, conveniency and leisure more than needful? And yet what useless pains we take to draw you to attend to what your heavenly Lord commissions us to say to you? Ah! Where are now the crouds, the throngs, the eager multitudes pressing from every quarter to listen to their God?

You'll tell me, may-be, that the case is alter'd; the word of God is not convey'd to you at present as it was formerly by God's own mouth: For all his doctrines now are spoken to you at second hand, and only by his ministers, and therefore cannot be the same. But give me leave to tell you, that you deceive yourselves, and grossly too. Surely you are very short of memory, or but a little faith would set you right. Remember what your Saviour tells his ministers, *he, who beareth you, beareth me; and he, who despiseth you, despiseth me*. 'Tis not the preacher then you go to hear; but God himself, whose voice and instrument he is; And therefore, as often as you neglect or scorn to hear him, it is God and not the priest whom you despise. And what can you expect from such a scorn, but that your slighted God should slight you in his turn; withdraw his grace; and leave you to yourselves? Ah beloved Christians! Provoke no longer then the Almighty's just contempt; but eagerly embrace all opportunities of hearing him, and finding out his blessed will to practice it. And that your attention to his holy word may be of profit to you; let me point-out to you, in brief;

- I. What dispositions are required to hear the word of God with fruit: *And*
- II. What are the fruits of hearing the word of God with a due disposition.

"Speak then: Yes speak, O Lord, thy servants hear thee. And while thou speakest to us give us those dispositions which may make thy blessed words of use to us. For ah! If thou do'st not give; where shall we hope to gain them?"

I. Sluggish and negligent as the major part of Christians are, I don't pretend to charge them all, with never going to hear the word of God. No: there are some, who, when at leisure, when neither business nor pleasure interferes, *that is*, in short, when they have nothing else to do, will go to hear an exhortation. It is an agreeable amusement: If the preacher be an orator; his discourse will give them pleasure: If not; it will at least afford them diversion. And this they are always sure of, that they will have an opportunity of killing an hour, which hangs heavy upon their hands. But is this, Beloved, is this a Christian way of hearing the word of God? Is not this a frame of mind fitter for a ball or a play? What benefit can any-one expect to reap from God's sacred truths, who approaches to hear them with so much indignity? Where is the wonder then, that of so many Christians who resort to hear the word of God, so few, so very few, come benefited from it? The matter is plain? The major part of them take no pains to cultivate their souls, for the reception and retention of this divine feed, and therefore can receive no fruit from it.

The dispositions then necessary to enable a Christian to hear God's holy word with profit, are of three sorts. The First sort are requisite before you approach to hear the word of God; the Second while you are actually hearing it; and the last when you have heard it. The dispositions with which you ought to approach to hear the word of God, are purity of intention, recollection and prayer. Curiosity, dissipation and indevotion are proper dispositions enough to set-out with to a farce or a concert: All you can propose from either is present diversion; and that your curiosity will agree with, your dissipation will promote, and your indevotion will double. But surely these can never be fit preparations for hearing the sacred word of God. And yet how many Christians pay visits to preachers, with no better a provision! How many are led to hear God's awful word from preacher to preacher, out of no better a principle than vain or malicious curiosity? Either more to tickle their senses with his language or action, if it be such as their self-conceit approves of; than to strengthen their minds with his doctrine? Or else to gratify a mean inclination to censure and criticism? How many follow a preacher, because they are pleased to like the man? And how many for no better a motive than because others do so? Ah foolish mortals! Is this a sufficient disposition for Christians to set-out with to list-

en to the ministers of God? Whether you think the preacher a perfect or imperfect man in himself; what has his personal merit to do with the sacred truths he is commissioned to utter to you? Has not your Saviour, in the xxiii of St. *Matthew*, already directed you to mind what his ministers say, without regard to what they do. It is not then the man but his doctrine you are to mind. As long therefore as a preacher is not so imperfect as to be discountenanced by the Church from teaching you; what excuse will your disesteem of him be for your disregarding him when teaching you how to be better than himself? In like manner, let him be as you wish him; what has the manner of his delivery to do with the doctrine he delivers? Whether his expression, his action, and his person be pleasing to you or not; are not the divine maxims he utters still the same, and ought not you then to embrace them with equal ardour? So you will, Beloved; if you come not to us more out of idle or malicious curiosity than out of the pious desire of improvement. That is one of the faults St. *Paul* charges the *Thessalonians* with, and that, *I fear*, is a fault in too many of you, *who walk unquietly*, as the apostle says, *working nothing, but curiously meddling*. "How many alas! How many, says a celebrated author, hunt after truth, not in truth itself, but in a maze of vanity; and finding the truth they seek, apply it not to a true purpose, but to a purpose of vanity! and what is the most wretched of all is that, in the very words of life, they negotiate the business of death."

But this, *you'll say*, is not the case with us, we come with no evil designs. Perhaps not, Beloved: But do you come with any designs at all? If you don't; you might as well forbear to come hither, or any where else, where the word of God is preach'd. If you repent not of your former life; if you desire not to reform; if you don't approach with the intention to learn from God the means of doing so; in vain you listen to the word of God. The obstinacy of your will is an impediment to all the fruits you might be capable of reaping from it; and "You will only find fresh matter in the words of life to negotiate the business of death." And yet I don't pretend to say, that none, who, are in a state of mortal sin, should go to hear the word of God; or that they are absolutely incapable of benefiting by it. No: Such have the greatest need and reason of all, to go and to go often. And such may reap the greatest fruits by reaping their conversion; provided they approach with a sincere desire of repentance, and with the resolution to inform themselves how to repent, and to put their information in practice. For without this what do they do but turn God's sacred word into ridicule, by listening to it with obstinate intention to neglect it? In

mortal

mortal sin or not then, Beloved, such as approach to hear God's holy word, without the purpose of improving by it, put an affront upon the Lord of Majesty; and thus "in the very words of life, they negotiate the business of death."

But how shall we come by a right intention without a little recollection? Can the immediate passing from prophane, perhaps criminal amusements, to the sacred employment of listening to God, be any proof of repentance, or of the desire of it? Or can an actual situation of attachment to sin, be a proper disposition towards learning to quit it? No; surely it is necessary, before we can learn to quit sin, to enter into ourselves in order to be acquainted with the nature of our attachment to it. O my God! Is it possible we should be desirous of seeking and finding thee, while we are voluntarily estranged and alienated from ourselves? Ah! No, Christians: It is impossible. Before you approach then to hear God's holy word; it is highly important for you to enter into yourselves, and there to examine what you are, what you should be, and how you may pass from what you are, to what you ought to be. If you do this with humility, and serious sincerity; you will not fail to find, that you are miserable sinners, that you ought to become penitent saints, and that the listening in a proper manner to God's minister, is one of the most probable means of converting you from sinners to saints. Nor can you recollect thus much without seeing the absolute necessity of recurring to God for assistance, to make a proper use of that means. The seeing how much strength you want to break the criminal ties you are held by, how much grace you stand in need of to lay hold on a holy repentance, and what superior lights you have occasion for, to reap these advantages from the divine doctrine which you propose to apply to, will sweetly force you to throw yourselves prostrate and suppliant before your Maker for his co-operation with your good designs, and you will insensibly cry-out in the fulness of your mollified heart, with the humble *Publican* and penitent *Psalmist*, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner! Lord, give me understanding that I may know thy laws.* In such dispositions you may approach with confidence to listen to God's word from the mouth of his minister; but without them, Beloved, alas you are miserably murdering your time, and "in the very words of life, negotiating the business of death."

The word of God deliver'd by the mouth of his ministers, is undoubtedly the word of life: inasmuch as it is capable of producing life in the souls of such as hear it, be they actually ever so dead to the divine Grace: For the words of God are *spirit and life* itself, and life is their proper operation. But there is another effect they may, and alas often

do produce, and that is death, the death of obstinacy in sin; which always leads to that of eternal perdition. This effect indeed is foreign to the Divine word itself; is produced only by accident; and depends chiefly on the disposition of the hearer. To make the word of God then the seed of life, and not of death to you, see what disposition you are in, while you are actually hearing it. Have you the faith in it, which Christians ought to have, Beloved? Do you attend to it with a truly Christian earnestness? Do you apply it with humility as Christians ought to do? In short, in the words of life, are you negotiating the business of life or of death? If you believe the sacred doctrines you hear, to be the words of God; if you have present in your mind what Christ said to us his ministers, *he, who hears you, hears me*: And if the faith you have in your Saviour fills you with conviction, that you are hearing God himself, while you listen to his ministers; your faith is truly lively, and you have made one step towards negotiating the business of life. But ah Christians! If, instead of this, you mean only to hear the minister of God; if you take what he says only for the sentiments of a man like yourselves, a frail man as liable to error as you are; what benefit can you hope to reap from what you hear? God has not promised any fruits to the words of men: It is his word only which is spirit and life; and you alas, for want of believing it such, are negotiating in it the business of death. It was by such an unhappy misbelief, that *Pharao* provoked God to leave him to the hardness of his own heart. He refused not to hear the word of God by the mouth of his minister *Moses*; but then he would not believe he was hearing God but *Moses*. No wonder therefore, that he should despise God's sacred injunctions, persist in his sin, and "negotiate the business of death, in the very words of life."

Listen then, Beloved, listen to the saving lessons you hear from God's ministers, as to God himself. Hear them attentively: For 'tis God himself who speaks, Call-out to him with eagerness, as *Samuel* did; *Speak, Lord for thy servant beareth.* Abstract your thoughts from the merit or demerit of the preacher, who is nothing more than the simple instrument to convey the sacred sound to you; and let your God engross all your attention. Should you receive a letter from your parent, your friend or your sovereign; would you neglect the contents of that to attend to the garb, the air, or the worth of the person who brought it? Would not your eagerness to know the will of the person, who sent him, rather prompt you to overlook the bearer and search into the grateful subject he brings? And why shall not you do the same, when your God sends his pleasure to you by the means of his minister? "It is not then to the speaker, says a venerable author, that the hearers

"hearers of *God's* word are to attend; not to his insignificant person: No, but to the things he speaks. They are what ought to engross the whole recollection of his soul, because the truths he delivers, he brings from *God*."

And yet of what use can the liveliest faith, or strictest attention be; unless you are humble enough to apply what *God* says to you, and to apply it to yourselves? If you hear the word of *God*, only to apply it to others; you may learn from it indeed to become notable censors of other people's misconduct: But what will that avail, towards correcting, or excusing your own? Ah how many resort to exhortations merely to learn how to inveigh with a colour of zeal against their neighbours! Hypocrites! Public pests, who, by inverting the good purpose of every preacher turn his charitable reproofs into downright scandal; find a personal reflection in every thing he says; and, in every kind of Sinner he means to convert, can tell better than he whom he must level at. But do wretches like these ever apply what they hear to themselves? No. If they did; after so many times hearing the sacred word of *God*, we might expect to see them something better'd. Instead of which you will find them ever worse, after the last exhortation; because as my author observes "in the words of life, they negotiate the business of death."

It was thus poor *David* had liked to do, when after his Sin of adultery and murder, the prophet *Nathan* came to him from *God*, and representing his crime to him, under the parable of a man rich in cattle, who had robb'd a poor man of the only ewe he had, ask'd him what punishment such a wretch deserved. *David*, was not so bad, but he was shock'd at the injustice, he abhor'd the heinousness of such an act in another, and was immediately for putting him to death: But ah! he was too much blinded by his own self-love, to see how much more guilty and base he himself was. The prophet was forced to apply to him, *Thou, thou art the man, who has't robb'd Urias of the only wife he had*. Ah Christians! Christians! If you mean to profit then by hearing the word of *God*; apply it to yourselves. When you hear him reproaching Sinners of their perverseness, and demanding satisfaction by the mouth of his ministers; be prophets to yourselves, and prevent *God's* sentence by your own. Cry-out inwardly every-one to yourself, "Thou, thou art the man, who has't robb'd this soul of the only grace it had."

Such are the dispositions requisite, Beloved, to hear the word of *God*, with any advantage. And yet these are not all. No, the present compunction which his divine doctrine may work in you, while you are actually hearing him, can but little avail you; if you do not improve the present benefit in-

to a lasting one. And how can you propose to do this; if, as soon as you depart from an exhortation, you take no more thought about it? To reap then from the word of *God*, the lasting fruits it is capable of yielding, you must digest it in your mind, and practice it in your actions. These are the dispositions in which you ought to depart. Alas of what use can it be to you, to give the word of *God* reception in your mind and heart, and yet to take no care of cultivating either in a manner fit to cherish it? "What fragrantcy has incense, says *St. Augustin*, till it be thrown on the fire? Or what relish has mustard till it be pounded? So neither does the word of *God* exert it's virtue, till it be rightly digested in the heart." And yet, Beloved, let your heart and mind have ever so digested *God's* holy word; unless you bring it forth in your actions, of what purpose is it to you? "If any one, says a learned Author, hears the word of *God*, and expresses it not in his actions; what is he like but the man, whom *St. James* the apostle hints at; who, after examining his face in a glass, forgets his own semblance, the very instant he turns his back on it." In short, to what purpose have you heard, to what end have you received into your souls the word of *God*; if, after hearing, after cherishing it, you stifle all it's fruits by forgetting or neglecting it? *God* speaks nothing in vain: What he says to you by the mouth of his minister, is for your conversion and salvation: And if you hear it and do not make use of it to that end; are you not contemning the riches of *God's* grace, and "in the words of life negotiating the business of death?" What will serve greatly to confirm all I have hitherto said, concerning this subject, is a very remarkable passage of *St. Augustin* to this purpose. "Which, says this wonderful doctor, which seems to you of most consequence the word of *God*, or the body of *CHRIST*? If you will answer truly, you must say, that the word of *God* is not inferior to the body of *Christ*; and, that therefore, he is not less criminal, who hears and neglects the word of *God*, than another would be, who, through his own negligence, should suffer the body of *Christ* to fall to the earth."

II. Ah Christians! dearest Fellow-Christians! Have you consider'd all this before? At least, is not the consideration of all this sufficient to induce you for the future, to acquire the dispositions requisite for reaping, from the word of *God*, the blessed fruits it is capable of producing? Is not my word like fire, says the Lord by his prophet *Jeremiah*; and like a hammer which breaketh the rock in pieces? Ah yes, beloved: There is no heart so harden'd but it must melt before the sacred word of *God*, if it be heard with simplicity of mind and heart, with hu-

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mility and fervor, with faith and desire, with attention and application. There is no sinner so confirm'd in sin but upon hearing the word of GOD, if he will but digest it and follow it, may be moulded into a penitent, may be converted and live. Conversion is the great fruit of God's holy word duly heard, the consequence of which is no less than eternal life. And therefore is it that holy *David*, who had had the experience, tells us, that *the law of the Lord is immaculate converting souls*. St. *Bernard* gives us a beautiful description of some of the sweet effects of it thus attended to. "The soul, (says he) acquiesces, by the word of God, to conversion; is enlighten'd by it to knowledge; reposes in it for virtue; is reform'd, by it, to wisdom: By conforming to it, it acquires beauty; by wedding it becomes fruitful; and by enjoying it reaps delight." All these are the fruits of the word of GOD heard with a right disposition. St. *Ambrose* goes farther still, and tells us, that "whoever is fed with the word of CHRIST, is indifferent to all earthly food. That alone can he relish, that alone satiates the soul and fattens the bowels." In a word, what the saint would give you to understand, is, that nothing is so capable as the word of GOD, once truly relish'd, to give you a distaste to all which is worldly. Nothing will sooner convince you of the real insipidness of all which is earthly, and nothing will give you a greater thirst and appetite after the solid joys it points out to you. This we see no where more strictly

verified than in the present Gospel, where we find that the Apostles, after hearing the words of CHRIST, *left all things to follow him*. They were made sensible how tasteless, how joyless, and how worthless was every thing created, in competition with hearing and following him. And therefore, *leaving all things they followed him*. So will you do; if, like them, You *press upon him to hear the word of God*, and do so with the same inward and outward dispositions they were in. And if, beloved, you have faith enough in your Saviour's words to believe, that, hearing us you hear him; you will be more diligent, than you have hitherto been, to press upon us to hear the word of GOD. This we ask of you for your sakes not for our own. What is it to us whether you come or not, but that we have your salvation at heart? We receive nothing, ask nothing, want nothing from you. We preach the Gospel to you freely and without cost, why will you not hear it as freely? All we require of you, Christians, is that you bring such dispositions as may qualify you to receive true, solid, and lasting benefit from the sacred doctrines we deliver to you from God, that "in the words of life you may not negotiate the business of death," by having to answer for neglecting the riches of his mercy, but that you may reap from them the blessings they are ready to yield you, which is a life of lasting grace in this world, and a life of everlasting glory with your God in the next. Which, &c. In the name, &c.

S E R M O N

On the Fifth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MATTHEW v. 21.

Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

ALAS can there be any possibility of such a justice as this? Can our justice abound more than that of men, who lay claim to the utmost-nice-ty of justice? Who were more strict observers of the law than the Scribes and the Pharisees? None more remarkably liberal than they in benefactions to the poor; whom they even gathered to their doors by the sound of trumpet, to partake of their domestic alms, over and above the large sums they threw into the common treasury of the necessitous, in the temple. They were so averse from public scandal,

that they suffer'd not the least defect in their neighbours to pass unreprieved. Then how did they fast? So rigorously, that their very countenances were disfigured, their cheeks pale and wan, their eyes perfectly sunk for want of aliment; and every feature spoke their inward suffering. In the temples they were always at the head of God's people, spurring them to prayer, by being the first and most conspicuous in that holy exercise. Nay, their very excursions through the streets were so many acts of public worship of their God. They were not like the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as the poor publican was: No, they were rigid discountenancers of every breach of God's laws. They fasted twice a week, and gave tithes of all they possess'd. In a word, they were just to a punctilio

a punctilio, charitable to profuseness, and religious to a scruple. They were so circumspect in their own conduct, as to suffer no blemish to bring a reproach on themselves; so zealous in watching the deportment of others, that no man could screen a blemish from their penetration; and so unwearied in the business of the divine worship, that they were for ever sacrificing, for ever praying, for ever taken-up with devotion in their temples, in their houses, nay, in the very streets. Ah beloved! what higher degree of justice can be aspired to by priests, by religious men, by the most zealous professors and teachers of christian perfection.

Say then, O my God, is it not enough even that thy ministers be possessors of a justice like this? Must every layman; every courtier; every soldier, lawyer, mechanic, and even servant abound more, or be for ever excluded from the kingdom of Heaven? O poor, deluded worldlings! Farewell then to your flattering, false, deceitful hopes in your little merits: Farewell to mistaken confidence in your lukewarm piety: Farewell to presumption: Farewell, farewell to Heaven; if you stop where you are: How short, alas how short, does not all your virtue, piety and christian justice fall of that of Scribes and Pharisees? Who still, with all their justice miss'd of Heaven! What vigilance is yours to keep your conduct free from blemishes, which cannot guard you, from one confession to another, from mortal breaches of God's sacred laws? Where is your zeal to discourage vice in others, while every day you are strengthening them in evil by your example? Where are the poor, the sick, or the distressed, fed, visited, or clothed in part by you? Where the sad hearts made glad by your advice or succour? While you yourselves are rioting in plenty for your several stations, will all your alms of a whole week, I will not say, of months, afford one dinner to a starving widow; buy one poor homely shirt to save a naked orphan from the grave; or snatch one famish'd soul from present misery? Is it your piety and fervor keeps you from the holy sacraments, makes you absent from public prayers so often, and renders you so loth to listen to God's holy word? In short, is it the zeal you have for the Almighty's honour, your own and neighbour's good, which makes you so tepid in them all. Alas! how weak then is your justice compared to that of Scribes and Pharisees? And yet, beloved, whatever be your state of life; so far from being any ways exempt from coming-up to them, your Saviour tells you all without exception; and therefore, you must believe it, that *Unless your justice abound more than that of Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.*

"But how can that be, you'll ask me?" Why—This is what I intend to make the subject of the

following discourse: In which, for your greater improvement, I shall endeavour to shew;

I. In what the justice of *Christians* ought to abound more than that of *Scribes and Pharisees*: And

II. How much the eternal salvation of every *Christian* depends upon this excelling justice.

"O grant, Almighty Sovereign, thy blessing to our humble thoughts: And pointing-out to us the truths we are searching after, give us the heart and grace to reap salvation from them."

I. To know how far you ought to excel the *Pharisees* in your justice, it will be necessary to examine, in what their justice was deficient. The *Pharisaic* justice then was all exterior shew, the pomp of outside piety without the inward spirit of it: It was, in a word, the religion of hypocrites. Your justice, Christians, must be internal, must flow from the grace of God within you and be divested of all dissimulation and human respects. Fasting, almsdeeds, and prayer are necessary duties; but not sufficient. Fasting is necessary for your own good, to subdue your own passions: Alms are essentially requisite for your neighbour's good, to rescue him from temptations or support him under them: And acts of religion, such as prayer, are indispensably required for God's honour and to obtain you his blessings. But alas! What are all these together without an inward Piety? Mere *Pharisaic* justice, odious to God and useless to you: And therefore *Unless your justice abound more; you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.*

It is no wonder that hypocrites, men whose justice is only *Pharisaic*, should always carry the fairest outside: They have no other way to impose on mankind their false pretensions to virtue, instead of the reality, than by making the most sacred means, such as piety, instrumental to their wicked Deceits. Their purpose is always to deceive and circumvent, and therefore no means more likely to answer their base intent than a shew of such virtue as is the widest from baseness. It cannot then be surprising to see such sacrilegious wretches cloke the blackest designs under the candid veil of outside Innocence and piety; prostitute the very means of salvation to the service of sin and Satan; and, with a malice out-stripping that of Lucifer, fight God with his own sacred weapons. And what crime is there so flagitious which we may not expect to see a man run into, who dares aim at undermining the throne of God's honour, by paying him homage; presumes to turn his laws into ridicule, by making them subservient to rebellion against him; and trembles not to insult the divine majesty, by making

making God himself a tool of his wicked devices? And what less do hypocrits do, whose justice is merely *Pharisaic*, and whose virtue and piety, proceeding from no inward grace and goodness, tend only to answer the corrupt intentions of pride, avarice, lust of pleasure, lust of power, lust of applause, luxury, or revenge? Ah! Well might your Saviour tell you, that, *Unless your Justice abound more than that of scribes and Pharisees; you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.*

For O how execrable is such baseness in the sight of God, and even in the eyes of the worst of men! These excepted. But to shew the horror of it in it's genuin light let us pursue this *Pharisaic* justice to it's darkest hiding holes. View then some hospitable man of modern stamp: What throngs of beggars croud about his gate! Wherever he goes, the poor pursue him with their prayers; and every church or charitable society can witness what large donations he bestows to feed the famish'd, and relieve the oppress'd. Yet trust him not. His charities, his alms are pharisaic, merely pharisaic justice. Why does he feed some poor, but that he may rob many? He is a hunter after guardianships and trusts; a plunderer of dead men's heirs and widows: And therefore may bestow some single pounds to gain a name, a title to execute his thefts without suspicion. For few men will believe a charitable man can be unjust. But ah! what justice is there in such charities? wretch! Begin first to restore the plunder you have heap'd, by usury, oppression of whole families, and breach of trust to helpless widows, babes, or other poor defenceless heirs; and then give Alms. Then, if you stand not in need of Alms yourself: Then, if you have one single mite to spare; join it with the poor widow's two, and you may share with her a premium, which till then you are unintitled to, however large your benefactions may be. For charity which is not built on justice is errant theft. The man, who has not paid his debts, restored his ill-gotten wealth, and wash'd his hands of all the fruits of fraud, before he gives an alms, is wasting other people's property; is free with what he has no right to, and liberal at his neighbour's cost. If his beneficence be justice; it is that of *Scribes and Pharisees* not of Christians. *Unless, beloved, your justice abound more than that; you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

What is the justice of this other? A man of worth, gracious and free and affable to all. A priest but asks him one poor shilling towards the support of a large family just on the point of perishing through want: And with what easy grace shall not he refuse it! What protestations of confusion will not he make; how grieved and downcast shall not he seem, that his perplexity of circumstance should force him to dismiss God's minister unheard in such a moving cause! Alas poor gentleman! What pity

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is it not, that such good-nature should want the means to make it useful? Ah Christians! Wait and you'll see, the means are to be found; the end is all. Let but a handsome woman tell a dismal tale; let a bold beggar come, back'd with a letter from; some powerful man he has a view of interest in, or from some pot-companion; and the good-natured man, who refused God's minister a shilling, shall lavish crowns and guineas in an ostentatious alms: and if he has them not at present call; shall even recur to pledges, to gratify his lavish fit and make the devil laugh. Ah how that common enemy of man delights in such misguided alms! and well he may: When such are Sacrifices made to him. For is it, think you, the distress of those who sue which moves this charitable man to liberality? No: 'Tis his lust, his avarice, or his pride: His thirst of wanton pleasure, sordid lucre, or unfruitful praise. Ah wretch! Unhappy wretch? What is this justice but the justice of a *Pharisee*? Beware then, Christians, beware you don't content yourselves with such a justice: For *Unless your justice abound much more; you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.*

Alas! What a pity is it not, that this other much better man should take such pains and be at so great cost to make himself the sport of hell? It is one whose substance is his own. Himself unprompted by the lust of lawless pleasure, interest or ambition, how liberally he shares that substance with the poor! But are the poor the objects of his views? Is it the love of God which melts his heart to pity on his brethren. Ah no! Such motives never warm his breast: 'Tis empty, flattering, false applause which charms his soul to softness. Else—why is he so careful to distribute his donations in the broad face of day? Why are so many second-hands employ'd? Why is the trumpet made to sound his praise through every street? “O the good man!” “The pious man!” The charitable “man!” And how the empty jingle pleases him! Charitable man? can such a man deserve the name of charitable? Poor vain, mistaken dupe, say I; the soul of all whose benefactions is pride, abominable pride, which perch'd forever on his ear, gapes like a starved *Cameleon*, to catch and feed on empty air; O that such inconsiderate *Pharisaic* just-men could but give one peep into the horrid pit of hell, and there behold the shocking mirth which their mistaken prodigality creates! How would they labour to conceal their alms from Satan's Observation! Learn then: O! learn, beloved, from their folly, to abound in justice. Be mindful of your Saviour's words, *Unless your justice abound more than that of scribes and Pharisees; You shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.*

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alms, in prayers, in fasting. This man would pray from morning to night wherever he could be seen; yet he could not be humble. This was a very pattern of abstemiousness; yet he could not forgive. This other gave some hundreds of shillings in the year to beggars; yet robb'd the widow and the orphan of some hundreds of pounds; gave pence in charity, and lavish'd treasures on his lust, his avarice or his pride; to grasp at lawless power or senseless praise, to tempt the virgin to forsake her honour, and bribe young wives to break their faith. And that poor object, link'd with these, was poor in substance, poor in heart; but O how wealthy in his covetous desires! All which he had above the needful was one poor mite; and that poor mite he had not the soul to part with, though to relieve a fellow-creature upon the point of starving. Yet all these pray'd or fasted, or gave alms, and some did all: And yet (alas!) for want of doing more, for want of love to God, and charity and justice to their brother, their justice was but pharisaic, and therefore could not save them from eternal ruin.

But ah! What miserable mortal, methinks, do I behold cloth'd all in fire, with serpents preying on his breast? Alas, it is a poor unhappy hermit. A hermit? O the terrifying thought! Alas, my God! What shall come of these poor worldlings; if hermits may be damn'd? Yes, yes they may: The devil has his saints; and this is one. Call'd to perfection, he set-out, by following Christ's advice; sold all he had, and gave it to the poor; dwelt in a lonely desert all his life; and spent his days in prayer and fasts, and self-denial in every thing but pride. But still forgot he was a useless servant; depended more upon his merits than on God's grace; in short, was pharisaically just, and now is justly punish'd.

Yet, turn your eyes from these, beloved, and fix your thoughts on a more shocking scene, a heap of miserable creatures, trampled upon by Atheist devils, and all the host of hell. Who are they then? A vile, ignoble group of priests of every sort; the leud, the mercenary, the slothful, the uncharitable and intemperate. O my God! Is there a hell for thy ministers? Yes, yes: Even priests as well as hermits may be damn'd; if, while they teach by word and outward example, they take no care not to become, at heart, reprobates themselves. How many thousands have not these fasted and preach'd, and, in their holy function, pray'd to Heaven? But then they did it for base lucre, for foolish thirst of praise, or some unhallow'd purpose; and lost the fruits of all they did, by being only pharisaically just. Ah! Woe, woe to you *Scribes and Pharisees*, woe to you *hypocrites* of priests, who, outwardly indeed, appear to men just, but inwardly are full of *hypocrisy and iniquity*. * Priests then, no more than other men, beloved, unless their

* St. Matth. xxiii.

justice abound more than that of Scribes and Pharisees, shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. No: They, of all people, shall be damn'd: And they shall make the pavement of the infernal pit, doom'd to be trampled-on forever by all the wretched people, who inhabit it, even by beggars.

But beggars! what have you to do in hell? Alms were not expected of you? "No, it is true, says "one: But I could have forgiven my enemy; and "that I did not. I could have pray'd with humble "heart, says another, but I rather chose to do it "publicly, that I might gain by it." And was your purpose answer'd? "Yes." Well then, poor wretch, thou has't received thy reward. But! how did'st thou come here, poor simple woman? It was not thy learning brought thee here, for thou can'st neither read nor write. Did you not fast? "Alas! my life was almost one continued fast." Did you not pray? "Yes, and that heartily."— Was it then for want of giving alms? "Ah, no: "But it was because my *justice* did not *abound more than that of Scribes and Pharisees*. I could "not read, I could not write, I could not preach; "but I could well have put in practice what I knew "I should, but never did. Instead of giving alms, I "might, for love of God, whose mercies I presumed to implore, have shewn mercy to a neighbour, and given up the hatred I retain'd for "slight offences done." Ah, Christians! If such an illiterate creature then must be excluded Heaven, for want of a justice abounding more than that of Pharisees; what shall become of you, who are not quite so low? But, come let us leave this wretched place, and learn to live in such excelling justice as may secure us from going thither again, never, ah never to return. Enough you have heard to make you wise. But ah! What need was there of diving into hell for proofs of the necessity of an excelling justice. Has not Christ told it you in the express words of my text. Have not his ministers full often reminded you of it. *And if you will not bear CHRIST and his ministers; neither if one shall rise from the dead, rise out of hell, will ye believe him.* * How plainly has your Saviour told you? How often have we told you? And what more for your salvation can we do, than once more to repeat to you, in his name, that, unless your virtue and piety flow from a heart warm'd with grace; unless your christian conduct be accompanied with ardent love for God above all things, and for your neighbour on his account; unless, in a word, your *justice abound more than that of Scribes and Pharisees*, you shall not enter into the kingdom of God. To such excelling justice then I beseech the mercy of God to lead you, by means of his improving grace in this life; that you may become partakers of his glory in the next: *In the name, &c.*

* St. Luke xvi.

S E R M O N

On the Sixth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MARK viii. 2.

I have compassion upon the multitude; because, lo, three days they now endure with me?

O My gracious JESUS! how I adore thee! O happy multitude! how I envy you! What praises, what thanks, what adorations, are not due to that sweet excess of goodness which induced thee, my Saviour, to take compassion on the weakness of a common populace! Who can reflect, O favour'd multitude, on your happiness without being transported with a holy envy? O blessed fast! blessed bearance and forbearance which could procure you the honour of being fed and refresh'd by your GOD! Who would grudge to endure weariness and hunger, for the sake of being entertain'd and treated to satiety by GOD's own hand, as you were? But! What am I saying? Where are my senses? Or what strange infatuation of ingratitude makes me thus absent to myself, absent to truth, and absent to thy universally experienced goodness, O my God? Ah, Christians! was the Almighty Provider any more liberal to this handful of people, on the present occasion, than he always has been to all his creatures? What, though he was pleased to exert his providential care of a few thousands, at once, by a more open miracle, in a more visible, striking manner to the senses; yet, is his miraculous Providence less careful of the meanest of you all? Or, is the ineffable miracle of continually providing you with necessaries and even superfluities less considerable in itself, or less fruitful to you for being common? If it be not; why are you so much affected with a transient miracle done in behalf of others, and so little moved by a continual, much greater prodigy daily wrought in favour of yourselves? You wonder at, you envy, and are almost disposed to call in question GOD's feeding four thousand people at the expence of one miracle; while you yourselves, with many millions more, live, breathe, move, and are fed, clothed and supplied with all the supports, and even comforts of life, by the same Almighty Hand, even to an immense profusion of miracles. GOD feeds a small party in an extraordinary manner, which you have not been used to; and therefore you wonder: He feeds you in as extraordinary a manner, but in

a way you have been used to; and therefore you are not so much as sensible of the favour. GOD works an open miracle to refresh a populace, worn-out with following and listening to him; and that, not till he has suffer'd them to languish and hunger for three days; and yet you are envious, and almost ready to murmur and accuse GOD of partiality: He works a continued miracle for your daily refreshment, without suffering you to languish one day for want of food; and that as well when you turn your backs on him as when you follow him: Yet you cannot vouchsafe to be thankful to him. GOD, in a word, takes compassion on a multitude who have endured some hardships with him and for him, and feeds four thousand out of seven loaves and a few little fishes to keep them from fainting. You cannot resolve to endure any hardships for GOD's sake; and yet he, all-good, all-gracious, still condescends to take compassion on you even to the multiplying harvest upon harvest, to keep you strong and lusty. Nevertheless, all will not do to stir-up your gratitude. With all this excess of bounty, you cannot prevail upon yourselves to trust in the Almighty's Providence: You must have fresh miracles wrought to content you: And at last it must be a miracle of grace indeed, which can persuade you not to murmur against GOD, under the least pressure or disappointment which can befall you. Let the least loss, the least decay of trade, the least diminution of circumstances surprise you; and what criminal compliances are you not ready to run into to relieve them, rather than depend upon GOD's Providence, or wait for relief from him! Let but the least danger threaten, not your lives, but your interest or ease; and how ready are you not to give-up, or at least to prevaricate in, your faith, rather than recur to GOD for protection and wait his deliverance. Whereas, would not that gracious Lord, think you, have compassion on you, if you endured with him a-while, as well as he had compassion on the multitude who endured with him for three days? Yes: But some of you rather chuse to seek relief in offending him, and to place your defence in denying him, or, what is little better, in being ashamed or afraid to own him. The first disappointment your pride or avarice meets with, is an excuse for any breaches of GOD's laws; and the first:

first difficulty, which seems to attend the profession of your religion, is sufficient to make you give up the practice: And, instead of depending on God for redress, you must depend on your own neglect of him; you must absent from public prayers; you must abscond from the word of God; you must put on the protestant, and refrain from fasting, from abstaining, nay from making the sign of the cross, for fear of being known to be orthodox Christians. O age! O manners! What is become of thee, O Christian simplicity? Where, Beloved, where is that hope, which alone can encourage you to be Christians? Where is that filial confidence in your eternal Father, which alone can make you the children of God? If you have not this; in vain are you Christians: Vain are all other hopes all other dependencies. To convince you of this infallible truth, I shall at present descend to consider separately;

- I. The reasonable necessity Christians are under, of placing a filial confidence in the divine providence.
- II. The conditions requisite to render such a confidence reasonable: *And*
- III. The certain advantages arising from such a confidence when it is reasonable.

“Forgive, Almighty love, forgive our past ingratitude, and little faith, and henceforth give us such a trust in thee, as may deserve thy future blessings.”

I. When I talk of the reasonable necessity Christians are under, of placing a filial confidence in the divine providence; I can, by no means, intend to exclude any, who are not Christians, from the ordinary benefits of God’s providential care, nor (consequently) from the obligation of relying upon it for relief and support. There is no human creature, let his necessities be ever so extreme, exempt from placing a filial trust in the Almighty; because the Almighty’s goodness is so inexhaustible, that he suffers none to go away unrelieved, who confide in him as a father. And what rational creature can possibly wish to exempt himself from so essential and beneficial a duty? Nay what wretch is so senseless, that he can doubt of God’s power and goodness to assist him, or of the reasonable necessity of trusting in him for that assistance? *He made the little and the great, and careth for all alike*, says Salamon: All then have have equal reason to rely upon him in their necessities. *In his hands are both we and our words, all wisdom also and knowledge*, adds the wise man: On him alone then we have reason to depend for all which we can reasonably desire or really want. *His wisdom*, says the same inspired writer, *reacheth from end to end strongly, and disposeth all things sweetly*. No man therefore can be in so great want or misery, as not to have reason to hope, through God’s

assistance, that he may rise to as great a degree of plenty and happiness.

Nothing will serve more to make this matter plain to you, Beloved, than reflecting, that you have to do with a God, who is infinitely powerful, and therefore never at a loss for means to provide for the ease and safety of his creatures. *In him we live, and move and be*. It was his infinit power made us what we are, out of mere nothing; and what then can hinder that same divine power from supporting us now we are something? What want, what affliction, what danger, what pressure can assail us beyond the reach of his mighty arm, to rescue, defend and support us? *Behold God is mighty, and despiseth not any: He is mighty in strength, and in wisdom.*

Yes, Beloved, yes: God is mighty in wisdom. This is another consideration, which lays all mankind under a rational necessity of filial confidence in him, amidst the greatest necessities, that the Almighty Being, whom they have to deal with, is as infinitely wise as he is powerful: And therefore can never be mistaken, either in the succour he is able to afford them, or in the time or manner of affording it. *Thou, Lord, disposest all things in measure, and in number and in weight*, says the wisest of men. What perplexity is there so intricate, which the all-disposing providence of God cannot draw a man out of, who places a confidence in him? Cannot He, who sets in motion the earth, the seas, the air, the heavens, and all things in them; who gives jarring causes their contrary action, without prejudice to each other, who makes and unmakes, at his pleasure; directs the seasons; guides all nature; and composes or discomposes all which is, when and how he pleases: Cannot He (*I say*) support, defend, and guard a single creature in any circumstance he may be involved in. Can He, who numbers every fibre of a man’s body, counts every single hair of his entangled locks, nor suffers one to fall without some providential cause, not rescue him from the most perplexing circumstance which may invest him? Ah yes! Thy providence, eternal Father, from the beginning, governs all things: Thou sufferest not a farthing sparrow to fall to the ground, without some glorious purpose: Thou cherishest both man and beast; and never art to seek for means to succour all. Where is the wretch then whose station is so desperate, that he may not expect relief from thee, if he will but apply for it? For thou art all-powerful and infinitely wise: And then: Thou art good, beyond our power of utterance: O how good!

This, my Beloved, is a third consoling argument, of the reasonableness of all men’s placing a filial confidence in God, amidst the worst of evils. That God, from whom their sufferings, their wants, and dangers cannot be conceal’d: That God, who sees their sufferings, and knows what remedies will heal them,

them, has not only the power but the will, to afford the balm they want. It is not a cruel Being they are govern'd by, but an all-gracious infinitely bounteous GOD who loves them. Yes: *Thou, dear Lord, says Solomon, lovest all the things which are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made.* What reason then can the most miserable of creatures alledge for desponding, or doubting of, the assistance of GOD's providence; if he will but seek it? Ah! "Who is there like the Lord our GOD, who dwells on high, and yet stoops to behold the humble things in heaven and earth, raising the poor from the earth, and lifting the beggar from the dunghill to the throne." Ah! Who indeed is like the Lord our God, so powerful, that he can do every thing, which is eternally and temporally best for us; so wise, that he cannot be mistaken in what is best for us; and so good, that he created us on purpose to do every thing which is best for us? For *how could any thing have endured, as the wise monarch observes, if it had not been through the bounty of his will; or how could aught have been preserved, if not call'd by him?* What excuse then, O desponding mistrustful mortals! What excuse can you plead, for calling the divine providence in question on every little slender disappointment?

Will you think your despondency justified by answering, that you are sinners, and therefore have no room to rely on GOD's providential care? You are sinners? True: You are so. But sinners as you are, your wickedness cannot have been so great as GOD is good; and therefore you can never have been so wicked, as not to have room for filial confidence in GOD's tender compassion, if you will but endeavour to deserve it, by penitently applying for it, in the midst of your trials. Ah my GOD! Base as we are, what baseness can we be capable of, which thy mercy is not capable of absorbing. *For thou canst do all things; and winkst at the sins of men, because they should mend, says Solomon: You are wicked, say you? Alas! why are you so? Why do you not mend? If you stand in need of GOD's providential assistance; if you are convinced, that it is in his power to redress your grievances; and yet apprehend, that your immoral conduct puts you out of the reach of that redress; alas! Why are you so much your own enemies, as to persist in wickedness? For—as I live, saith the Lord, I will not the death of a sinner; but rather, that he be converted and live.* No: You are not impenitently wicked, you'll tell me: But still you are wicked; and therefore dare not trust to the providential care of GOD, which you are conscious of not deserving. But ah! Who of us all does deserve it? We are all sinners, all but miserable sinners. "There are just and wise men, says Ecclesiastes, and their works are in the hand of God: No man knoweth whether he be worthy of love or hatred: But all things

are kept in doubt to the future: Because all things happen alike to the just and impious; to the good and to the bad; to the clean and to the unclean; to him, who offereth victims, and to him, who despiseth sacrifices." GOD, you see, makes no difference between the goodness and badness of men, in the dispensation of his temporal blessings; but *maketh his sun to rise upon good and bad, and raineth upon the just and unjust.* Why then, should you make such a distinction, as excludes you from the benefits of GOD's merciful impartiality? If your having been sinners, is sufficient to destroy your filial confidence; the same reason will hold good to deter all mankind from the same. For, *if thou observe iniquities, Lord; Lord, who shall endure, says confident David?* No, says his inspired son: *Thou sparest all: For they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of souls!* O extatic comfort! O consoling reflection! Who can think on this, and not see the reasonableness of all men's recurring to a filial trust in GOD's divine bounty, amidst their necessity; let their crimes have been ever so great. Does not the Almighty graciously protect, support, and cherish the vilest of sinners; the most obstinate heretics; the most confirm'd miscreants? Are they not equally supplied with the necessities and affluences of life, in common with the best, and most observant Christians. Shall Christians then despair, despond, or hesitate to trust in him for succour, in their wants and afflictions?

Reflect a little, O pusillanimous Christians, on the ingratitude of such a diffidence; and you will be forced to blush at it. By whose aid and relief, do the very worst of you live, breathe, and bare up under the greatest afflictions? Is it not from the source of his inexhaustible bounty you draw all the strength, which preserves you from sinking beneath your distresses; even while you are provoking him to desert you, by calling his providence in question? If then your gracious GOD condescends to continue to you the blessings of life, breath, and other assistances to support your afflictions, at the very time when you are forfeiting them by a thousand discontents, a thousand murmurs, a thousand distrusts; what reason have you not to believe, that, that same gracious GOD would go yet farther, and release you from your afflictions, if you endeavour'd to deserve it by a filial confidence in his divine providence.

If Infidels and sinful Christians have room to hope in the divine providence; how much more reasonable is not a filial confidence in those who labour to be good Christians? They are under the more immediate wing of GOD's protection. "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright, says the royal Prophet, and they shall not be confounded in the time of evil. The steps of such a man are order'd by the Lord. Tho' he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: For the Lord supporteth

"eth him with his hand." Nay the holy *Psal-mist* tells us, that there is no instance of a righteous man's being abandon'd by the Almighty. "I have been young, *says he*, and now am old: Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." So careful is the divine Providence of such as faithfully serve, and confidently put their trust in God! What reason then has not every human creature, to place a filial confidence in God's all-redressing bounty, let his distress be what or how great it will!

Nay, beloved Christians, it is not only a matter of reason, but of utmost necessity. If in want, in sickness, in dangers, or other distresses, your dependence is not on God; on whom, or what can you build it? On the assistance of men? Alas, says *Solomon!* *the thoughts of mortal men are miserable!* On your own devices then? Alas, says he, "all our devices are uncertain! For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind, which museth up on many things. And hardly do we guess aright at things, that are at hand." And after all, beloved, what if we should happen to guess right? Our wisdom is still but guess-work, still uncertain in it's dependences. You are in want? can you depend then with any certainty on the rich for relief? Alas! Who will supply your necessities; unless the Lord open their hearts to do it? But perhaps you can defraud; you can lye; you can prevaricate: What if you can? Can you promise yourselves success from so doing? Have you not reason rather to expect that God will overthrow your devices? You are sick; Ah! What succour can physician, or medicines afford you; unless the Lord directs the prescription of the former, and adds a blessing to the latter. But your constitution is good? Let it be so: Pray! who gave you that constitution, or who can preserve it to you, but the all-sufficient Being who gave, to you yourself? You are ship-wreck'd? What dependence can you have on a giddy cock-boat, or an unavailing plank, unless the Lord vouchsafe to guide it to land? Can you swim? It is happy for you: But who must give life and motion to your limbs, who must bid the overwhelming surges subside, and who must supply you with spirits and activity, to reach the distant shore, if God denies it? And what reason have you to expect the assistance of his providence; if you either distrust it, or neglect to recur to it with filial confidence? How much safer then, Beloved, is it not to fix your chief confidence on the power, wisdom and goodness of God, than on those of others or your own? Nay how necessary is it not, to throw ourselves wholly under his protection? For O my God! What will all our strength or wisdom avail, set in opposition to thine! How justly has thy prophet said, that, "tho' a man be ever so perfect among the

children of men, yet if thy wisdom be not with him, he shall be nothing regarded!"

O Christians! Christians! Pusillanimous Christians! How long will you tempt God, to withdraw his providence from you, by first withdrawing the filial confidence you ought to place in him? Why will you suffer every little trial to make you diffidently solicitous? O ye, of little faith! If you are at present in want; is not He, who provides the ravens with food, capable of supplying you? Cannot He, who fed four thousand at once with a few loaves and fishes, find nouriture for you; if you trust to him for it? And for rayment, why are you so careful, as to neglect your duty to God, through eagerness to procure it? "If the grass in the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so cloath; how much more you, O ye of little faith!" Ah! Why must your solicitude for health, keep you from prayers, for every slight indisposition; if the bare fear of it does not suffice? Cannot He, who preserved the three children in the fiery furnace unhurt, for preferring his honour to their safety, cannot he preserve you from Sickness? Cannot He, who saved *Peter* from sinking, guard you from dangers by land or sea? Why then, why do you doubt, O ye of little faith? Why do you forget the reasonable necessity you are under, of placing a filial confidence in the divine providence? Do you not see, that, by thus doing, you discharge the Almighty of the care of protecting you, and justify God's judgment in abandoning you to your own insufficiency.

II. "But what, you'll say! Must we then expect miracles from God? No: No uncommon ones. The ordinary miracle of his daily providence, is sufficient to rescue you from every danger, every evil which can befall you, if he so pleases: And that he will; if you have but the grace to confide in him. But what; if it was otherwise? What, if your case required ever so great a miracle to your assistance? That will not excuse you from wholly relying on him for that assistance. However, Beloved, let us understand one-another, before we proceed. When I require you to place your confidence wholly in the divine providence, I do not therefore mean to dispense you from industry. No: That is past my authority: God himself requires you to exert all your industry towards your own relief, and sends you to the ant, to learn diligence and sagacity. But there is a wide difference between virtuous industry and worldly solicitude. To be so careful of to-morrow, as to neglect the Christian duties of to-day, through a mistrust of God's sufficiency to provide for you, is injurious to God, is making an ungrateful use of his present assistance, and placing yourself in an independence on him; and therefore is highly criminal, as well as extremely

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ly dangerous. But to *seek first the kingdom of God and his justice*, and then gratefully and industriously, to employ the present talents and means his providence affords you, to provide for the morrow, is Christian prudence: and therefore a virtue. You then, O merchant, or tradesman, are not forbidden to pursue your lawful traffic or business; provided you do not suffer it to break through your duty to God, and charity to your neighbour. These are the means God has given you for your support; and you cannot expect, unless you have already a sufficiency, to be supported but by these, without presumption. You, soldiers, physicians, lawyers, divines, are call'd by God, to defend your country, to assist the sick, to right the injured, to instruct the ignorant, and, in so doing, to support yourselves. You cannot then, without arrogance, neglect these dispositions of providence, in hopes of being supported without them. You, O mechanics, labourers and servants, are call'd by God to labour: The strength and opportunities given you to work, are the means which the divine Providence has chosen for your support; and, without using these, you cannot depend upon the Almighty for a support, without presumption. In short, Beloved, whatever be the station, in which God has appointed you to labour, you must make use of industry: Otherwise your confidence is not reasonable, or filial, but arrogant and presumptuous, and attempting the divine providence, to stoop to the low office of indulging your indolence and sloth.

So—when God gives you the present means, to lay up for the morrow; is it not tempting God, if you neglect lawful opportunities, to trust to future providence? Foolish mortal, who reasonest thus! Providence has done it's part by you; and you let the opportunity slip. Blame yourself then, and not providence, when the day of scarcity comes, that you are not guarded against it. Why did God bless *Egypt* with a seven years double harvest, but that it might lay-up against a seven years famine? Why does God send you to the ant, but to learn industriously to provide, in the summer of success, against the winter of want? And why does he actually supply you with the lawful means, of acquiring more than is needful to support you and your family, for the present, but that you may reserve some part of it, against the winter of old age, sickness, decay of trade, or other disappointing events, which you cannot foresee, and yet may expect? And therefore, provided you are neither covetous, nor uncharitable: provided you neither set your hearts upon hoarding, nor withhold your hands from relieving your distress'd neighbour; it is not only lawful, but a commendable duty in you, to make a reasonable reserve against the morrow. So—if you are sick; you are not to omit the ordinary means for obtaining a cure. They

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are all the dispensations of providence, the neglect of which is rather presumption, than filial confidence. And if you are well; you are not to expose yourselves to unnecessary heats or rains, nor otherwise to encounter whatever is injurious to your health: They are rash attempts, and rather presuming than confiding in providence. In like manner, when danger threatens your life, by land or by sea; can it be reasonable to require a miracle of God to rescue you, where his ordinary providence may suffice? No. *If death pursues you in one town; flee to another.* If you are caught in a wreck at sea; have recourse, under God, to a plank. That is the means, providence, has allotted for your deliverance; and therefore to neglect that, is not so much confidence as presumption.

St. Paul work'd for his living: St. Peter, by *Christ's* command, was more than once employ'd in his business of a Fisherman: Our divine Saviour himself, vouchsafed to be supported by the labour of his putative Father, and even shared his toil with him: For I, says he, by the mouth of his prophet, *I was in labours from my youth.* Nay as much as he inculcated poverty; he condescended, for example's sake, to have a purse kept for the necessities of himself and his apostles, as St. *Augustin* observes: He cured the distemper'd with spittle and dirt, when he could have cured them without any medicines; and commends the *Samaritan*, for pouring wine and oil into a poor man's wounds. He, whom the winds and the seasons obey'd, refused not to screen himself from their inclemency, by the help of a garment. He fled the malice of the *Jews* from place to place, and directed his disciples to do the like. And tho', where the honour of God call'd him, he fear'd not to walk upon the waters, as upon dry land; yet he never refused the assistance of an humble boat, whenever it offer'd. And why all this, but to convince you, Christians, that virtuous industry, care and prudence, are so far from being inconsistent with a filial confidence in the Divine providence; that they are necessary conditions to render your confidence reasonable and well-grounded.

There is another condition, however still equally necessary with those I have already mention'd; that is, to render yourselves pleasing to God, by an innocent or penitent life. This by no means clashes with what I have said before. No: It is still true, that no man can have been so wicked, as not to have reasonable room for filial confidence in God's tender compassionate providence; if he will but penitently apply for it. But then: Ah! It is still as true, that, without placing yourselves in the grace of God by repentance, it is presumption, not filial confidence, in you, once you have sinn'd, to expect any protection or assistance from God. And yet

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yet where is the man so wicked, who can alledge a reasonable excuse for despairing in the divine mercy, and providential goodness? You are wicked? Ah wretch! Is it not in your power to repent? Is it so hard, to be sorry, for having offended your good God? Do but that: And, *tho' your sins be as scarlet; they shall be white as snow*: And be you but full of hope: and you will be as much intitled to the benefits of the divine providence, as the greatest innocent. But, without that, however, many instances of forbearance God may daily shew; his patience is no reasonable ground for you to hope for his assistance, while you are in a state of sin. Such then, my dearly beloved, such are the conditions absolutely necessary to render your filial confidence in God, reasonable and well-grounded, as that of Christians ought to be.

III. And, with such dispositions, what advantages may you not reap from confiding in the divine providence! One very great and certain advantage, attending your reasonable hope, is, that, by throwing yourselves wholly upon the goodness and mercies of God, for a blessing to your endeavours, you make it incumbent upon him to defend, assist and cherish you. His divine word is at stake: *Come to me all ye, who labour, and are heavy laden; and I will refresh you*. * And therefore; as he is eternal verity, he must fulfill what he has promised. Ah! Dear Christians, do you reflect what it is to be under the immediate wing of God's protection? O! Who can speak the comfort, which such a situation must yield, in the very midst of earthly distress? *David* indeed aims at it: "How great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O gracious Lord (*says he*) which thou has't laid up for them, who fear thee: Which thou has't perfected for them, who hope in thee, before the sons of men. Thou shal't hide them in the secret of thy face, from the disturbance of men: Thou shal't protect them in thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues.†" O what a rapturous comfort, to be under the wing of so tender a God! Who can hear this, and not almost wish for distress, to deserve such a happiness, by enduring with and for God? Ah! Christians, "love the Lord then (*as David says*)" for "the Lord preserveth his faithful. Be of good courage; and he shall strengthen your hearts, all ye, who hope in the Lord."

What is there, which the goodness of God, cannot, will not, do, to comfort and assist you in your wants; if your faith and confidence are but reasonably fix'd on him. His ordinary providence is alone sufficient, without a miracle, to raise you from eve-

ry misery, you can be in, to every happiness you can wish. But suppose your necessities were actually, such as nothing but a miracle, could free you from: Are you the less necessitated, or have you the less reason, to depend upon God for assistance? Have you not the same God, who ruled in the days of *Elias*, in the days of the *three Children*, in the days of *Daniel*? Is his power abridged since then? Can he not send you bread to save you from perishing, by the mouth of a crow, by the hand of an angel, or by the ministry of another *Abbaccuc*? Can he not save you from the flame of a fever, as well as of a furnace? Is not your God the God of *Jonas*, of *Peter*, of *Stephen*, of the penitent *Thief*? And is his goodness diminish'd from what it was? Tho' you should be swallow'd up by distress; can he not, and is he not ready to stretch forth his arm to defend you, if you but call upon him, as they did: And why may he not open to you, as well as to them, the gates of heaven, either for your comfort, or your reception? *Why therefore do you doubt? O ye of little faith!* Why do you not rather comfort yourselves in your afflictions, by saying, with holy *David*? *The Lord is the protector of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?* * If, instead of desponding, you said thus, with but as much faith, in proportion, as the size of a grain of mustard seed; you might say to every mountain of difficulty, which stood between you and relief: *Remove hence, and be thrown into the sea*; and it should be done. Yes, Christians, yes. Nothing would become impossible for your confidence to obtain. He, who had compassion on the multitude in this gospel, would not fail to have compassion on you; if you endeavour'd, like them, to deserve it, by confiding in his future goodness; by enduring with him in the present trials, he thinks fit to send you; and by repenting of whatever you may have formerly done, to forfeit the assistance of his bounty. In a word, Beloved; The same gracious God, who wrought a miracle for this four-thousand, would not grudge doing four-thousand miracles for every-one of you, if necessary; would you but put your whole trust in him, as they did, and render that trust reasonable, by seeking first the kingdom of heaven,† and then concurring with the divine providence towards your own support, in a virtuous industry, care and prudence. For then he would graciously take-upon himself the miraculous care of adding all things besides,‡ which might any ways contribute to your happiness, or be consistent with it; but chiefly such a plentiful portion of grace in this life, as would infallibly lead you to the glory of the next.

Which, &c. in the name, &c.

* St. *Matth.* xi.

† *Psal.* xxx.

* *Psal.* xxi.

† St. *Matth.* vi.

‡ *Ibid.*

S E R M O N

On the Seventh SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MATTHEW vii. 15.

Take ye great heed of false prophets, who come to you in the cloathing of sheep, but inwardly are ravening wolves: By their fruits you shall know them.

YOU must often, beloved Audience, have heard that vulgar expression, which proceeds from as vulgar an error: "It is a pity fair weather should ever do harm." This imports no less than an inconsiderate censure of God's wisdom, in the making unpleasant weather necessary: For what is it less than saying: "What a pity is it not, that foul weather should ever be useful?" So—should we venture, in the absence of our faith, to say, "What a pity it is, that truth should ever be subject to contradiction;" what less should we do, than tax the divine goodness of our heavenly pastor with a defect, in permitting heresies to be. Whereas surely the ineffable bounty of God, in suffering that heresies should be necessary, appears as plainly as his infinit wisdom, in the dispensation of the less pleasing seasons. Is it a pity, *say you*, that fair weather should ever do harm? What a much greater pity would it not be, *say I*, that foul weather should not be sometimes expedient? How would you be sensible of the pleasure of delightful weather; were you always to remain insensible of the inconveniency of the less grateful seasons? It is then a vulgar error, to imagin, that dark, damp, or sultry weather, is not as wise a dispensation, as the most temperate sunshine. Is it a pity, *say you*, that truth should ever be subject to contradiction? Rather let me say: What a pity would not it be, that there should be no heresies to contradict it? How should we, who adhere to it, ever become sensible of all it's beauties; if we never saw it confronted with falshood? It is by the contrast of their opposits, that all things are known. And truth especially, shines forth with double lustre to all, who behold it with untainted eyes, as often as it is elbow'd by it's bare appearances. The just would lose one half of their praise, in adhering to truth, were they never tempted to depart from it, by the artifices which Satan makes use of to substitute falshood in it's place: *There must be heresies then, as St. Paul says, that they, who are approved, may be made manifest among you,**

* 1 Cor. xi.

There must then, and will be, beloved, as long as the Church subsists, false prophets and teachers; whose business is, under Satan, to seduce, if possible, even the very elect. And many of these will not attack the flock of Christ, by an open defiance of truth, or a barefaced defence of falshood; but under the guise and mantle of truth itself, they will labour to spread the unsuspected mischief of their destructive doctriens. Wolves as they are, and ravening wolves, ever yearning, ever hungering, ever abroad upon the scout, after unwary souls, to prey upon their credulity, they will still render it very difficult, for the most wary among the faithful, to guard against them; by endeavouring to steal into the very fold, *in the cloathing of sheep*. There will then be false prophets among us: Yes, dear Saviour! Thou has't warn'd us of them. But ah! Why will thy infinit goodness permit them to come upon us thus in disguise? Why wil't thou not force them to lay aside the mask, and attack our faith and adherence to thee, in open day? Then should we be able to repel them with ease: Then should we be prepared for them, and upon a proper guard against all their attempts.

O heedless Christians! Why will you not be so even now? Have you not much greater reason to stand upon your guard, against the cover'd enemy, than against the open one. Christ has already warn'd you, that both shall attack you: He has given you the marks to know them by: And, if you are surprised by them into your destruction; whose fault is it? Not Christ's? but your own? He has commanded you to *watch and to pray, that you enter not into temptation and danger.* * And if he suffers danger to attack you, through false prophets, from all quarters; why is it, but, that you may stand perpetually on the watch against their surprises; keep close to the body of his flock, and never suffer yourselves to straggle, one single step beyond the pale of his church, after those double-dealing decoyers? Take heed then, beloved; *take ye great heed of false prophets, who come to you in the cloathing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them.* No less than your eternal happiness is concern'd in your vigilance. O! Be vigilant then, and steady, in resisting them; if you have that eternal happiness at

* St. Matth. xxvi

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heart.

heart. And that you may be the better qualified to resist; I shall at present undertake to point-out;

- I. How different are the doctrine and manners of these false prophets; from those of the true, that *by their fruits you may know them*: And
- II. How easy the means, which will infallibly guard you against every surprise from them.

“ Mean time, O God, all-gracious God, enlighten thou the minds of this thy little flock !
 “ Give them to see the danger they are in, of being
 “ drawn from thee, their only happiness and safety : Teach them to pray and watch against surprise ; and keep them ever wakeful to their own security.”

I. From what I have said of the useful necessities of heresies, you cannot conclude, Beloved, that God forces or leads men into any error. No : He only permits for the sake of proving, and perfecting the faith of his elect, that such should fall into error, as would be wicked, even within sight of the truth. He could not fulfill his gracious dispensation of free-will to man, without this. To leave man in possession of that gift, it is necessary, he should permit those, who are obstinately bent upon making a perverse use of their free-will, to embrace falshood, if they will needs prefer it to truth. All he can be expected to do, is, graciously to offer them sufficient light, grace and means, to make a better choice. And, if, spite of his condescension, they will obstinately persist in their attachment to error, it becomes necessary, for the honour of his truth, which is guarantee for the freedom of their option, that they should be permitted to run into falshood. But then the necessity of their heresy, proceeds not from any positive influence, or co-operation of the Almighty; but from the propensity of their own malice. “ When therefore the apostle saith: *Here-
 “ sies must be*, he sheweth the event, *says the Rhe-
 “ mish Commentators*; and not, that God hath so appointed it as necessary. For, that they are, it cometh from man’s malice and free-will; but that they are converted to the manifestation of the good and constant, in faith, and the Church’s unity, that is God’s special work of providence, which extracts good out of evil.” Let us then, beloved, as St. *Augustin* advises us, “ let us use this benefit of God’s providence. For heretics are made of such, *says the Saint*, as would be naught, tho’ they were in the church : But, being out of it, they are of the greatest advantage to us ; not by teaching the truth, which they don’t so much as know ; but by stirring-up the carnal in the Church, to seek truth, and the spiritual Catho-

“ lics to clear the truth.” And a little lower, “ Therefore, *adds this glorious writer*, Many are raised out of their lethargy by heretics, to see the day of God and rejoice.” Of such signal service are heresies to the truly faithful ! O my sweet Lord ! How gracious art not thou then, even in thy permissive providence ; which suffers heresies to be ! What thanks do not all the faithful members of thy Church, owe to that excess of bounty ; which makes thee so watchful to convert to their good, even the poisonous doctrines of those false prophets, whom thou permittest to try their fidelity to thee ! But ah, my beloved Christians ! How shall you be able to reap the advantage of these wise, and bountiful designs of the divine Providence ; unless you carefully observe your blessed Saviour’s advice ; unless you stand upon your guard against these false prophets, and take the greatest heed not to be imposed upon by their deceitful approaches.

Christ has already warn’d you, not to suffer yourselves to be duped into any confidence in them, by the fairness of their outward appearance ; for that, innocent lambs or sheep, as they affect to be thought, they are inwardly very wolves, ravening wolves. And that you may not be unprovided with certain means to detect them, under any mask, any disguise, they may put on ; he has left you unfailing marks to discover them from the true sheep and pastors of the fold. *By their fruits you shall know them*. With whatever daubing disguises then of pretended piety, these ministers of iniquity, may attempt to gloss-over their pernicious doctrines ; whatever pains they may take to quote heaven for their authority ; examin but into the fruits, which their doctrines produce in themselves and others, and you will find no difficulty, in distinguishing them from the true pastors of God’s sending to you. This is a divine truth, which, if the being utter’d by Christ, was not more than sufficient to make it unquestionable, the succeeding evidence of every age’s experience, would render irrefragable. And no age ever afforded plainer proofs of it than this, when the two extremes of falshood, irreligion and fanaticism, join issue in the iniquitous attempt of subverting Christian truth ; when impiety and false piety, suffer’d to lift their heads with impunity, are struggling for the mastery, to stare true religion out of countenance ; and when the impudence of false prophets, rises to such a height, that it is a difficult matter, even for the most constant adherents to truth, to keep their minds steadily fix’d upon it, or to steer the happy mid-way, between glaring vice, and the bare affectation of virtue, for the many fictions with which those impostors block-up all the avenues to orthodox faith and morality.

For the truth of this, I shall send you no farther than to those two extravagant heresies, of our own age

and country, the *Fanatic Patriarch of Methodism*, and his peevish protesting *Antagonist*: Both false prophets alike; Both tending alike; tho' by different means, to the subversion of religious truth and piety; and both coming alike, as your Saviour describes them, *in the unsuspected cloathing of sheep*. But ah, beloved! *Take ye great heed of them both; for inwardly they are both but ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them.*

It is one thing to be a sinner, another thing to be an encourager of sin. The best of men, and the best of prophets and guides may sometimes fall into vice or error: Witness *David*, witness *Solomon*, *Jonas* and other prophets: Nay, some of the Apostles themselves. But they, who, setting themselves up for prophets, teach vice and falshood, are likely to be, not merely *the least in the kingdom of Heaven*, but rather the lowest in the regions of darkness; because the worst men upon earth.

The marks which Christ has stamp't upon the prophets, the pastors, the ministers of his own appointment, are such and so visible, that it is impossible for any of the faithful sheep of his flock to mistake them. They are no bold intruders, men of disguise, who cannot produce their commission; who, after stealing into the fold, can neither point-out the door they came in at, nor prove themselves sent by him alone who had the authority to send them, and whose name they labour in vain to screen themselves under. No: they are men lawfully sent; men who can prove their mission from Christ, by an uninterrupted succession of pastors, legally ordain'd by those very persons, to whom Christ himself said, *As my Father hath sent me, I also do send you.** They are men who can shew the door they came in at, the Holy Church under whose authority they act; whose doctrines they adhere to; and whose directions they practise, in obedience to Christ, who tells them, that *he who will not bear the Church, shall be reputed as a Heathen and a Publican.*† Christ then is the door, they enter by, to the feeding of his flock; and *he, who entereth in by the door*, Christ tells you, *is the shepherd of his sheep.*‡ They teach the flock of Christ to follow him by the way, he has pointed-out, of a holy faith animated by good works: They preach humility, charity, patience and Christian perfection: They, more intent to feed than to fleece their flock, guide them on, with christian fear and hope; without suffering them to lean either towards despair or presumption: And they, unblinded by self-sufficient arrogance, presume not to substitute their own dreams, innovations and fallacies in the place of Gospel truths; but, faithfully submissive to that Church, which their divine Master promised to guide into all truth, their whole

* St. John xx. † St. Matth. xviii. ‡ St. John x.

attention and zeal are bent on teaching her uniform doctrines to the people; that *they may be one, as Christ and his Eternal Father also are one.** Such, my beloved, such are the true prophets and pastors your Saviour has appointed for your direction. And such alone are able to lead you to him. *By these fruits you shall know them.* These are fruits not to be expected from false prophets. *Do men gather grapes off of thorns, or figs off of thistles?* No. It is the good tree alone which yieldeth good fruits; and the evil tree yieldeth evil fruits, as the eternal wisdom assures us.†

Take heed then, dearest Fellow-Christians; *Take ye great heed of the false prophets, who come to you in the cloathing of sheep.* Trust them not for their harmless outside. No, no: *They are inwardly ravening wolves.* And *by their fruits you shall know them.* What are those poor impotent abettors of opposit absurdities, the broacher of Methodism, and his furious, frothy opponent, but mere blusheless intruders into the cloathing of Christ's ministry, without being chosen or sent, without so much as a call, nay, even a whisper, from him? What proofs of their mission can either of them produce, rotten twigs, as they are, of a more rotten branch, long since lopt-off from the solid trunk of Christ's mystical body, the Church; through which alone they could have received the divine influence, the power and graces, requisite to prove themselves lawful pastors of his flock? Whence can they claim the very ordination, on which all mission must be built, but from a dirty, dark, mellow mystery of *Nag's-head* iniquity? Senseless, self-exploded forgery! Which, if the Church itself had not, from the beginning, wash'd it's hands of, stood openly pre-impeach'd by our Saviour's own words in St. John: *Every-one, who doth evil, hateth the light, and cometh not to the light; that his works may not be reprov'd.*‡ But why should we put them to the useless confusion of proving their mission from such a foul imposition, as the powers of darkness, who first inspired it, have long since given-up to ridicule, and which they-themselves have the sense to be ashamed of? In-so-much that these new-sprouting heads of the old hydra of heresy would fain give you to believe, that their commission comes immediately from on high. But, alas! To what little purpose do we press them to produce their credentials? All the certificate they have to shew, of their powers from Heaven, is their crying-out, with unhallow'd levity, or fanatic enthusiasm, *Lord! Lord!* But has't not Thou, O eternal Truth, caution'd us, that *not every-one, who saith to Thee, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven,* § nor conse-

* *Ibid.* † St. Matth. vii. ‡ St. John iii. § St. Matth. xii.

quently be able to lead others thither. *Ab, take heed then of these false prophets, dear Christians, who, tho' they come to you in the cloathing of sheep, yet inwardly are very ravening wolves;* and, under the deceitful pretext of leading you to Heaven, are labouring to decoy you into the high road to perdition. Examine them separately; and by their fruits you shall know them.

What is this arch-fanatic? This mushroom of our own raising? What are the rest of his methodical prophets, but a set of temerary mortals: Who, building all sufficiency of grace on their own authority, set themselves up for masters; take new names; and, separated from their infancy from body of Christ's church, have even cut themselves off from the skeleton of a church they still pretend to be members of? Full of inconstancy in doctrine, full of pride and intolerable vaunting of their own knowledge above all the establish'd fathers of antiquity, and full of disobedience to all judgment but their own, they deny the very plainest scriptures which can bring them to order. Under the dark disguise of preaching-up justification by faith in Christ, they overthrow the necessity and merit of good-works; and, blinding the souls of such, as are fast enough a-sleep to dream by their illusions, hurry them, under the specious names of the Spirit and the Inward Man, into the utmost insolence of spiritual pride. In a word, true-serpent-like, with the golden bait of christian perfection, they slyly draw their unwary followers into the infernal snare of predestinarianism; and thus lift-up some to the most daring pitch of presumption in their salvation, without any good-works; and hurl others headlong into the most precipitate despair in God's mercy, with all their good-works. And for this they plead an immediate commission from God himself: A commission which they extend, to the throwing all order into confusion; to the contempt of all ecclesiastical authority; and to the condemning all, as no Christians, who do not adhere to them; to them, who despise the censures of every power which lays claim to the title of a church, notwithstanding what Christ has said, that *he, who will not hear the Church, shall be reputed as a heathen or publican.* O my Saviour! Did'st thou send these lying prophets to us? Did'st thou empower them to overthrow that Church, to which thou once did'st promise to send thy spirit of truth to guide it into all truth? If thou did'st; O give them better credentials! Give them such fruits as we may know them by.

St. Paul, I know, was call'd to the ministry by God himself. Christ, in person, descended from Heaven to call him, in the presence of many witnesses, in his way to Damascus. His mission then

* St. John xvi.

was plain; and yet St. Paul, with all this, could not exercise his function of apostle, till he had been received by the Church, and had his credentials sign'd by her; not (in a word) till Ananias had imposed hands on him,† and he had thereby received the Holy-Ghost, and power to preach the Gospel. Nay, with these credentials, the very apostle himself tells you, † if he or any, even an angel from Heaven, preach another gospel to you, besides that which has been preach'd to you; let him be anathema; let him be look'd upon as an excommunicated person, an out-law of the Church. Shall every giddy mortal then, who dares rebel against all order, presume, in defiance to Christ's Church, to invert his Gospel? And shall he, beloved brethren, gain credit with you, without being able to shew you any better authority than his own arrogant illusions? No, dear Christians, No: Heaven forbid it! *Take ye great heed of such false prophets, who, however they come to you in the cloathing of sheep, yet are they inwardly but ravening wolves. By their fruits you may know them.*

Their mighty opponent indeed (mighty in wrath and lungs though not in arguments) proceeds not in the same track with the deluded enthusiasts we have been talking of. He (gracious Heaven convert him!) openly protests against extraordinaries and bye-ways: And, even scruples not to treat christian perfection, self-denial, and the Cross of Christ, as mere bye-ways. (*) He is utterly against being righteous overmuch; and cautions his readers against forsaking the broad-way of worldly pleasures and vanities, to seek the narrow path of mortification and penance. Christ, he tells them, in express terms, (without any explanation) came eating and drinking into the world; wrought a miracle in favour of excessive drinking, and only spoke hyperbolically (that is, spoke more than was true) when he inveigh'd against the pomps and vanities of the world. And therefore he concludes, that you are right enough in conscience, without minding what he said. Nay, in open opposition to Christ, who purposely came to teach us a perfect abnegation of the world, and all it's pomps and vanities. He positively adds, ‡ that "All men must have to do with some vanities---; or else they must needs go out of the world indeed: For the world is all over-run with vanities." Excellent argument for fornication, adultery, thefts, and frauds and other uncleannesses! For is not the world all over-run with these also? This reason then (if of any weight) would hold equally good, why all men should have

† Acts ix.

‡ Galat. i.

(*) See a piece intitled, the Foll; Sin and Danger of being Righteous overmuch.

‡ In the same piece.

to do even these greater abominations; if this man was a lawful prophet. Well, well then may he rail, with, such inveterate malice, as he does, against popery. Well may he labour to decry, by the most infamous, notorious calumnies, the spotless Church of Christ; which anathematizes such antichristian doctrine. What think you then, Christians? Can such extravagant teachers deserve any credit from you? Can such, by crying-out, *Lord, Lord*, be qualified to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, or to lead you thither. Ah no! *Take ye great heed of these false prophets, who come to you in the cloathing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you may know them.*

Hitherto, beloved, you see I have talk'd to you only of miscreants; of false prophets, out of the pale of Christ's Church. But, ah! Heaven guard you too from ever meeting with other still more ravening wolves, under the cloathing of sheep, in the very heart of the fold. Heaven guard us all from such mercenary wretches, as, though lawfully sent to keep unity and harmony in the flock, should basely pervert the commission they have received, and pervert it to sow the most destructive schisms among the faithful. What else could we call them but ravening wolves, if ever such traitors should appear among us, as (through a sordid and mercenary view of engrossing a number of the flock to themselves) should use all the meanest artifices, which heretical cunning can be capable of, to sow discord among the people; to give the laity a distrust of their teachers; and to ingratiate themselves, by distinctions in the priesthood unknown in the Church, till this perverse age; when mercenary avarice, sordid ambition, and the desire of fleeing rather than of feeding, the sheep of Christ's pasture, are alone capable of bringing them in? O, how opposit would not so detestable a spirit be to thine, O glorious apostle! Who instead of encouraging the *Corinthians* in their inconsiderate attachment to thee, didst so warmly rebuke them for it. *It is signified to me, my brethren, says St. Paul, that there are contentions among you; for that every one of you saith, I certainly am Paul's, and I Apollos's, but I Caphas's, and I Christ's. Is Christ then divided? Why, was Paul crucified for you? Or, in the name of Paul were you baptized?* Ah, Christians, be assured of this: Your true pastors, more interested for your salvation than your purse, will steadily follow this glorious example. Instead of insinuating to you such distinctions as pave the way to a schism in the Church, the fatal consequences of which are so much the more to be dreaded, as they are not to be foreseen; they, who sincerely cherish your welfare at heart, will rather la-

* 1. Cor. i.

bour to remove from you every disposition towards partiality. Whatever character then they may assume, who should hereafter presume to instill such pernicious doctrines into you; whatever sanctity they may put-on; however they should screen themselves behind an affected submission to the Church; however they might turn-up their eyes, and approach you as prophets and pastors of the fold; never venture to believe them; trust them not. Rather suspect the mercenary, the hireling, the thief and robber, who, fearing to enter by the door of Christ's unity, climbs by another way, the way of avarice, and discord. Let me then rather, in the name of your Saviour and his Apostle, ask you, *Is Christ divided?* Did seculars die for you? Were regulars crucified for you? Or, in the name of priests, were you baptized? No, No: Beloved, we are only the instruments and ministers of his salvation to you: And his power is one and the same in all of us. We, all alike, are sent to baptize you in his name. to preach him (and not ourselves) crucified to you; to administer his holy sacraments to you, not ours; and to lead you, by his grace alone, to the kingdom of Heaven. Such only then among us, as, doing this, with charity and harmony, do the will of the heavenly Father, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, and be able to lead you thither. And all, who act contrary to this, are false prophets; are traitors; are spies of schism in the Church, and inwardly ravening wolves. Beware of them: *Take ye great heed of them. By their fruits you shall know them.*

II. Be cautious then, beloved, and suffer not yourselves to be deceived by any such. Follow closely your true prophets and pastors of Christ's appointment, of whatever order they be. Pay them all an equal veneration and obedience, without regard to any other title or character belonging to them than that of priest or prelate. The very best of them, indeed are sinners, miserable sinners: And yet, the worst of them, in their own private practice, may be good and useful in their public ministry, because they have all the same power, all the same office, and all the same zeal to save you; excepting such wretched hirelings, whose love of disorder (if any such there should appear, as those I have been speaking of) might induce them to forfeit the commission, which would make them lawful pastors, for such sordid views as can only prove them false prophets, of whom you are cautioned by Christ to take heed.

Stand then upon your guard, dearly beloved brethren, against these, and all other kinds of lying prophets. Pursue therefore the means, the infallible means, your Saviour points-out to you: Watch

and

and pray, that you enter not into temptation. Never listen to the doctrines of such as attempt to seduce you by flattering speeches. Whatever they say to you, which is opposite to the doctrines you have already been taught; whatever innovations you observe in their principles and practice; whatever they advance contrary to that harmony which makes the most shining ornament and support of the Church; stop your ears to it as to the hissing of serpents. Suspect the mercenary, suspect the hireling; and be not seduced by their unchristian insinuations. And that you may persevere and improve in your vigilance; pray the Almighty to assist you, with a steadiness of faith; make frequent acts of it, and repose yourselves wholly, with a fi-

lial hope, in him, for your constancy in his blessed will. By these means it will be out of the power of false prophets to hurt you; and all, which their time-serving, covetous artifices will be able to do, will only serve to increase their shame, and your reward. For to this end alone does the Divine Providence suffer such things to be, *that they, who are approved, may be made manifest among you.* May the Almighty then grant you his holy grace to make this christian use of the false prophets he suffers to try your fidelity; that, through the grace of Christ, approved in this life, you may be rewarded in the next with that glory, which I beseech God, of his infinite mercy, to grant you: *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Eighth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. LUKE xvi. 8, 9.

The children of this world are wiser than the children of light in their generation. But, I say to you: Make to you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that, when you fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

THE children of this world, beloved, are they, who preferring the transitory, unsatisfactory pleasures of the earth to the lasting, satiating joys of Heaven, chuse rather to build their hopes on the uncertain dependences of this life than to seek any certain safety in the comfortable promises of the next. They are a blind generation, who, forever buried in the fascinating desires of the flesh, dream-out life in the perpetual darkness of absent grace: Who, heaping sins upon sins, live forever estranged from God and his Church: And who, though Christians by profession, are nothing less than Christians in their own practice and Christ's esteem. Because, more intent to pursue their own lawless appetites than to follow his example and precepts, they voluntarily renounce to his blessed promises; chuse rather to be children of the world than of Christ; and, for the sake of present satisfaction, cut themselves off the benefits of his mediation. These, these are the unhappy creatures whom your divine redeemer says, *Not for the world do I pray. O Saviour of mankind! What must their miserable*

situation be for whom thou refuseth to pray? What lights, what knowledge, what understanding can they have to carry them, even through the most common emergencies of life, who, thus desert and are deserted by thee, the fountain of all wisdom? How then can it be conceived that *the children of this world, are wiser than the children of light in their generation?*

The children of light are they, who, postponing the empty allurements of a vain world to the substantial delights of an eternal crown of glory, chuse rather to depend on the promised rewards of the life to come than to forfeit them for present enjoyment. They are a generation of happy souls, who, making use of the grace and talents given them by God to work their salvation in fear and trembling, struggle-on towards the possession of that bliss they are call'd to. In a word, Christians in outward profession, they labour to be such in private practice; and, preferring self-denial and the Cross of Christ to self-gratification and the pleasures of the earth, throw themselves under the wing of his Mediation. These, these are they whom the eternal father gave to his divine son. These are the happy, thrice happy creatures, of whom the all-gracious redeemer of mankind says to his heavenly Father, *For them do I pray: Not for the world do I pray, but for them whom thou hast given me.* Ah how, once more, O Saviour of our souls!

souls! how then comes it, that *the children of this world are wiser than the children of light in their generation.*

Alas beloved! is not the matter visible to every eye? The children of the world, the earthly-minded, the followers of vice, neglect no means to second their unruly appetites; lay hold on every incident which may improve their pleasures or their interests; and so awake are they on all occasions to whatever may regard their temporal ease or safety, as even to turn the very counter-strokes of disappointment to their own advantage. Witness the steward in this gospel, who, when in danger of his Lord's discharging him, apply'd to fraud for a provisional security from want against his being out of service. The means was criminal 'tis true; and had been foolish in a child of light, who could not without inconsistency, prefer a present fleeting criminal advantage to a future guiltless lasting one. But in a worldling! whose principle it is to renounce the future for the present, the means was perfectly consistent, a master-piece of earthly policy and wisdom, and a convincing proof how much *the children of this world are wiser than the children of light in their generation.* How many means alas do these neglect of forwarding their spiritual career! How many happy incidents do they let slip, which Heaven design'd for their improvement in every grace and Christian virtue! And so disturb'd and disconcerted are they at every little disappointment their good actions meet with; that scarcely can they stand their ground: much less get forward in their Christian race. But ah how inconsistent is all this with their continual struggles towards the glorious prize they are contending for! The thought is really melancholy: And yet if we pursue it, perhaps it may afford a cheerful consequence.

For upon examination, I find two great mistakes in the conduct of the good and bad: both are industrious alike in their different pursuits; but the industry of both is ineffectual: Because alike defective on both sides, tho' in a different sense. In the bad it wants principle, in the good it wants method. In a word, the industry of the wicked is misplaced, and therefore criminal; and the industry of the good is mismanaged, and therefore imperfect. To apply therefore all the remedy possible to these two capital mistakes, shall be my endeavour in the present discourse: In which I shall undertake to convince you,

- I. That one half the pains, which the wicked take to be viciously happy, would make them virtuously so, if rightly placed: *And*
- II. That the same pains, which the virtuous take to be at last but imperfect Christians, would make them quite perfect ones, if rightly managed.

VOL. II.

"O Thou, dear God, by whom we live and move, who givest us the power to be industrious, O teach us that true Christian industry, by which alone we can attain to thee."

I. That one half the pains, which the wicked take to be viciously happy, would make them virtuously so, the single instance of the steward in the present gospel is sufficient to demonstrate. He was falsely accused to his lord of being unfaithful to his trust, in consequence of which he was upon the point of being discharged from his office, which was all the probable means he had towards an honourable support. What! to be calumniated and not deserve it? What! after being strictly honest, to fall the sacrifice of obloquy in common with villains? A hard trial this, it must be own'd, and few have steadiness enough to bear it. Shall a man acquit himself with so much punctuality of the confidence reposed in him, as not to take the advantages which his post afford him to make the least provision for himself against future contingencies, and yet be liable to be turn'd out of his bread upon the first ill-grounded report, which malice, envy, or mistake raises against him? This however is many a man's case, as well as this steward's. What then has a man to do under such a provocation? I know what I will do, says the worldly wise man. If I am defamed, it shall be for something. If I am treated as a cheat, I had as good be one. I'll even then have recourse to fraud, and make myself amends for the loss of my reputation by deservings to lose it.

Such was the wisdom of our steward. Upon the point of being dismiss'd from the service of his Lord, he endeavours to ingratiate himself with the tenants. To compass this, he has recourse to fraud, possess of the rent-roll of his master's estate, away he posts from one tenant to another, compounds with them for part of their rent, strikes of what he pleases, and huddles-up their arrears as his fancy and passion suggest. What a deal of idle pains is here taken to gain the uncertain favour of men as fickle and fraudulent as himself, against he should come to stand in need of a friend! And all this too with the risk of being detected; all this with the fears and under the apprehensions of being farther punish'd, if betray'd; and all this with the anxious uncertainty of meeting with any grateful return, from those who reap'd the benefit of his fraudulent practice. And yet, according to the principles of the world, the action was wise, and his Lord who was a rich man, and probably might have gain'd his riches by the same kind of wisdom, cou'd not but praise him for what he had done, could not but approve by his own rule, any vicious industry which tended to personal ease and safety. For in this

this the children of this world are wiser than the children of light in their generation. But O my God! How true is that which thou hast told us that *the wisdom of men is folly with thee!* If this man, according to the world's notion, was wise in taking so much pains and running so much risk, to make himself friends of the mammon of iniquity, for the sake of procuring a future vicious precarious happiness; how foolish was he not in thy eyes, when almost half that trouble, without any risk, would have sufficed to make him virtuously happy for a lasting certainty. Had he while he was honest but had the resolution to continue so; had he instead of recurring to fraud made a virtuous use of the mammon of iniquity, the riches intrusted to him, call'd in the debts to a farthing, ballanced his accounts and stated them to his Lord; he would have been able to refute his calumniators, to establish his reputation of an honest man above the reach of slander, and to rivet himself immoveably in his esteem and service. Thus would he with the mammon of iniquity have made himself friends, at a very small pains; friends on earth, who on any emergency would have thought in their own interest to promote his; and friends in heaven, who when he fail'd to this life, would have *received him into the eternal Tabernacles.* So true is it that one half the pains which the wicked take to be viciously happy, would suffice to make them virtuously so, if their industry was but rightly placed. But such is the perverse inclination of mankind to all that is forbidden, that virtue, with ever so much ease, is less supportable to them than the greatest difficulties which tend to a criminal enjoyment.

You shall see a man of trade so very industrious in his business as to omit no vicious means to provide support for his family and himself. How early does he rise, how late does he go to bed! How hard does he labour! his hands, his head and his heart are so fix'd on the means of improving his stock, that he has not time to say one short prayer in a morning to his maker to call down a blessing on his labours: To make one short ejaculation to heaven for his assistance, without whom in vain he labours, who builds or does aught besides! To hear mass on a holy-day, to use any abstinence on a fasting day, to give an alms to the poor, alas it cannot be expected from a man whose time, whose health, and whose money, are all of stead to him in the business. He is resolved to pursue independantly on God, that he may procure a comfortable support, that is a vicious one. Well: And what success do all his labours meet with? Why, for want of God's blessing he can scarce live: All his measures are thwarted; and notwithstanding all the frauds he makes use of to second his labours, notwithstanding all his

impositions, notwithstanding his selling the worst of goods at the most extortioning rates, he is daily running out. Ah! What a melancholy case is this, to be so industrious to so little purpose.

But ah! Fool, is it not your own fault? You are industrious 'tis true, but all your industry is misplaced. Know you not that *unless the Lord build the house he labours in vain who builds it.* Why do you take so much more pains than you need do, when all your pains must be fruitless without the blessing of God? Why do you work so hard to make or expose to sale, what you will never be able to vend unless the Lord send you customers? Labour then less, pray more, observe the laws of God, and his church, be honest and charitable. Do this, you will be industrious enough and your industry will be well placed. God will give a blessing to it, it will never overpower you, and your health will be rather improved than impaired by it. Those who deal with you once will find it their interest to deal with you again, the prayers of the poor, with whom you share the superfluous part of your substance, will draw-down a blessing upon your undertakings; and thus with the mammon of iniquity, the worldly substance you possess, you will make to yourself friends indeed, who when you fail of life will *receive you into the eternal Tabernacles.* Nay you will even make friends here, who on every emergency will be ready to assist you, and whether they do or do not, you are sure of this, that the testimony of a good conscience will make you happy in every station, and virtuously happy.

But ah! What do I say? That one word is enough to invalidate all I can advance in favour of happiness. All men are desirous of being happy and at ease. It is for that they all struggle, labour, and encounter so many and great dangers and difficulties. But alas, do but mention to them the attaining to it by virtuous means, and there needs no more to fright and distaste them. Shew this tradesman, who has taken so much pains to procure a vicious content, that one half the pains, will make him virtuously happy, alas he will not hear you and much less believe you. To demonstrate to him that his labour is vain, his industry useless, and his purpose frustrated, is quite needless. He sees it himself and is but too solicitous to apply a remedy. But ah! The remedy is worse than the disease. He neglects his business, runs from place to place, borrows money of all who will trust him, and spends it on all who will partake of it with him. Thus under the idle pretext of promoting business, his family, and affairs are running to ruin, while he lives in a public house, riots with every spend-thrift, impairs his health and involves himself in every misery. Fool, do'st thou not see, whither all thy industry is tending? Who, think you, will be willing

willing to have any dealings with a sot, who neglects his business, gives himself up to drunkenness, and is buried in debauchery? Is it the way to retrieve for you, to leave your wife, your children, your family to starve at home, while you are purchasing future famine abroad, at an extravagant rate? No: all the fruits you can expect from such vicious industry, is to see your wife and children (if you have any) reduced to the parish allowance, if not brought to the streets or the highways by your ill example; yourself coop'd-up in a jail or an hospital, if you are not reserved for a more miserable end to die in a ditch.

But what would you have me do? Trading is dead. I labour all day in vain, yet cannot get bread. All my dependence therefore, is on making acquaintance, and all the means of making them, is frequenting company, which is not to be done without drinking and spending money. What then must I do? *I cannot beg*, I cannot work at any other business than that I was brought up to: I have not courage to beg: And steal openly I dare not. Ah wretch! It is not necessity, but the love of riot, which makes you reason thus. If you dare not steal, you dare run in debt, to glut your own luxury; if you are ashamed to beg, you are not ashamed to reduce your family, and creditors to beggary: If you cannot dig the earth; cannot you penetrate heaven, and draw thence a blessing on your labours? This would ease you of some part of those labours, and render the rest prosperous. If you can find money for frotting, would not a part of that given to the poor, turn to better account than that of impairing your strength? And if you observed the fasts and abstinence of the Church, would not that lessen your family expences, and enable you the better to carry on your business. In short, would you place your dependence on God, but be obedient to his Church, be honest to those you deal with, and charitable to your fellow-creatures, your labours would be at least one half less: Your happiness even in this life, would be certain and lasting; and God would give an encrease to your store. Thus might you *make to you true friends of the mammon of iniquity, whom, when you fail, might receive you into the eternal tabernacles.*

But there is no bringing mankind to a sense of these truths. Another man is hurried away into down-right slavery by lust. The gratification of this, he places all his happiness in, and to compass this, what pains, what expences, what fatigues will he not endure: The lavishing all his substance, the exposing his health, reputation and life, are all trifles to compass the poisonous favours of a wanton harlot, whose faith he can have no reliance on. A senseless mortal! What an idle extravagant industry is this, to attain to a vicious happiness, in the de-

ceitful murdering smiles of a monster, who cannot be true to you, when *she hath forgotten*, as the wise man says, *the Covenant of her God.* * What sweetness can you expect in a wretch *whose end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword?* But what must I do, says the letcher, to gratify the desires of the flesh? Do? Recur to God for the gift of chastity: Fast, abstain, humble and subdue your carnal appetites? Or if you must gratify them, take a virtuous mate approved by God and his Church; who may share in your pleasures and pains, be an assistant to you in the service of God, and your temporal concerns, and whose interest it will be to promote and consult yours? But ah! It is this object, this individual object, which excites my wantonness: This is the flame I am consumed with, and there is no allaying it, but by sacrificing my substance, my health, my reputation, my life, and all to it. For alas, I cannot behold without burning. But, foolish mortal! Can you not shut your eyes? Can you not fly the person, fly their company, fly every thing, which brings their idea to your mind? Instead of taking so much pains to go out of your way, to have a glance or sight of them, instead of losing so much time in visiting them at their house, or meeting them elsewhere; Take but half the pains; go a shorter way: Save one half your time, and stay at home to pray against the temptation, or visit where you are sure they will not be. In short, place all your industry, in avoiding to see or be seen by the dangerous person. *Remove thy way far from her*, says the Holy-Ghost in the Proverbs, "and come not nigh the door of her house. Lest thou give thy honour to others, and thy years to the cruel. Lest strangers be fill'd with thy wealth, and thy labours be in the house of a stranger. And thou mourn at last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed. And say, how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof."† Is not this Beloved, a much easier way to reach to happiness. By this means you save your substance, health, reputation, life and soul, by this means you avoid an infinity of anxieties, attending such lawless pursuits, by this means you lessen at least one half your pains, and secure to yourselves, when you have wean'd your affections, a true happiness, which the gratification of them could never have obtain'd you. But

Is ambition or lawless power, the happiness you pursue? Is it for the sake of false glory, you take so much pains and fatigue, O industrious worldling? O how idle are all your labours, your anxieties, your restless days and sleepless nights! How vain those courtly attendances, those superfluous extravagances, those cruel self-denials, submissions, and expectations! And how insupportable those killing perplexities of suspense, between hope and fear, probability

* Prov. v. 8. † Prov. ii. 7.

ty and uncertainty, prospect and doubt, which break through your peace, disorder your health, and rob you of yourself! And for what are all these, but to grasp at a shadow? To attain to a post, a pre-eminence, an honour which you never can rise to, but by stepping upon calumnies, treacheries, forgeries, rebellions, and perhaps every crying crime. Ah do you purpose to be happy? By such means, you can only be criminally so, that is, not being happy at all for want of that peace of conscience, which alone can afford any true solid happiness. Nay it is a hundred to one, whether after all your vicious endeavours, your foolish industry succeeds. How much pains then, how much anxiety, danger and difficulty might you not avoid, and become perfectly happy, would you but renounce the false honour you aspire to, when you see it is not to be reach'd, but by such vicious and laborious means. By doing this, instead of labouring in vain to seem great, without any labour you would really be great. Instead of losing both your time and your pains, in grasping at the shadow of happiness, you would hold it irremissibly, without the expence of either; and the virtue of knowing how to despise the honour, the grandeur, the power and principality you cannot attain without criminal practices, would make kings and princes of you, would crown you with all the glory of their pre-eminence, without the burden annex'd to it. For true happiness consists not in the enlarging your fortune, but contracting your desires: As the summit of glory is not placed in the extending your power, but in the quelling your ambition. Thus then is it that you should make to yourselves, *friends of the Mammon of iniquity*, that when your life fails you, *they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles*. And thus doing, you will secure yourselves happiness at a much cheaper rate than you possibly can, as worldings go about it. So true is it, that one half the pains which the wicked take to be viciously happy, would suffice to make them virtuously so, if rightly placed.

II. Nor is it less true, that the very same pains which the virtuous take, to be at last but imperfect Christians, would make them quite perfect ones, if rightly managed. But ah, my God, how much wiser are the children of this world, than the children of light in their generation! They lose no advantage they can lay hold of to improve their criminal purposes into success: They never are at a loss for stratagems, to make to themselves iniquitous friends of the mammon of iniquity: But thy children, O light of the world, what advantages do not they lose? How many opportunities do they lose of making to themselves *friends of the Mammon of iniquity: Friends who when they fail, might receive them into the eternal tabernacles*.

How many Christians shall you see extremely charitable to the poor, hospitable to the stranger, beneficent to the prisoner, tender to the sick, merciful to a weak brother, and universally bountiful to all in distress. Alas what a pity is it, such Christians should lose the greatest part of all their charitable offices, for want of a proper direction of them to God, or for want of a manner in what they do! One gives alms very often and largely, but gives them more through habitual tenderness of heart, than through any positive actual design of doing so for God's sake, and for the relief of his image: Another perhaps, does succour his afflicted brother, for God's sake, but then, makes him feel the weight of the benefit received by the bitter taunts, or other mortifying circumstances he accompanies it with: And while he heals up one wound in the breast of his fellow creature, by his charities, opens another wider and more insupportable one, by the manner of bestowing them. Ah foolish mortals, would it cost you any more pains, when you are shewing your love to your fellow creature, to make an inward act of love to God, and direct the whole to his honour and glory. This would make your Christian charity perfect indeed; whereas through your mismanagement of it, you make it at best but an imperfect Christian virtue, if it be a Christian virtue at all. For it is very much to be fear'd, that such heedless works as these, however good in themselves, become merely acts of natural virtue, when not spirited by a direction to God, and therefore of very little fruit towards an eternal reward. If you are convinced it is right to relieve the distress of a brother, will it cost you any more pains to do it with tenderness? The perfection of fraternal charity, consists in making the sad heart glad for God's sake, whereas your charity when convey'd with the sting of a mortifying manner, only changes one pain for another, perhaps a more cruel and sensible one than that you remove. Unless then you consult the manner of your relief, as well as the relief itself, your charity is very imperfect, if not useless! How idle then is it for Christians to lose all, or at least great part of their good actions, for want of a little care to manage them rightly, when no more pains is required to make them perfect, and highly meritorious in the sight of God and man.

You pray and abstain, Beloved, you keep the feasts and fasts of the Church with punctuality. You do well: But ah how comes it then, that you are still such imperfect Christians? Sound your own souls, tell me with what spirit do you do this? Don't you do it from prejudice, custom, and seeing others do so? Do you ever offer up your prayers with a due attention? Do you go to Church purposely to honour God more than because it is Sunday?

day? Do you offer up your fasts to GOD in atonement for your sins, to satisfy his justice, to humble your flesh, and draw down the divine blessings on yourselves and families. This, this is the perfection of christian prayer and fasting. And what more pains are required to pray and to fast, with this attention and intention, than to do both without either? Is it not plain then that the very same pains you take to be at last but imperfect Christians, would suffice to make you quite perfect ones, if rightly managed.

I dare say, there is none here who does not often frequent the holy sacraments? And yet, which shall I pick out among you to shew an instance of a perfect Christian? Are you not all negligent in promoting GOD's honour? And envious of your neighbour's good? Are you not all dissemblers, backbiters, flatterers, and some way or other uncharitable, if not unjust? Are you not all impatient in adversity, insolent in prosperity, glad of every seeming advantage over your neighbour, murmuring against GOD when he delays gratifying your wishes, and ungrateful to him when he does. In a word, are you not all enslaved by your passions, and given to crimes, or, at least, imperfections too gross to be expected from persons, who have recourse to those fountains of grace. How comes this then, but from your approaching to them without the necessary dispositions? You go to the holy sacraments; but go more out of habit than true devotion. When you go to confession, your repentance is not real, or is but weak, you bring not with you a deep sense of your sins, a sincere desire of reform, a firm purpose of observing the injunctions of your director. And without these, alas, to what purpose do you go? And what more pains or confusion would it cost you to bring these dispositions along with you? When you go to communion, your devotion is custom, your prayers are rote-work, and your adorations almost mockery, because you are so used to go, that you grow quite familiar with the blessing, take no thought of the GOD you receive, or, if you do, take very little notice of him when you have received him. Whereas, what more pains would it be to you, when you do leave your business to approach to your Saviour, for you to dwell holy on entertaining and being entertain'd by him. What more time

would it take up to adore him, implore his blessings, and offer yourselves wholly up to him? It is for want of these dispositions that you are thus imperfect, notwithstanding your frequenting those sources of graces so often as you do. For did you carry them along with you, you could not fail of being as perfect Christians as they are capable of making you. And these dispositions would cost you no more pains, than the going without them. So true is it, beloved, that all your christian industry loses the greatest part of it's fruit for want of right management; as the industry of the wicked is entirely fruitless by being misplaced.

And yet they are wiser in their generation than you, because they are consistent in their wickedness, and neglect no vicious means to second their vicious intentions, and make criminal friends of the *mammon of iniquity*. Whereas, you are consistent in nothing; you trifle away the most holy and easy means to attain to the holy state you aspire to; and, when you might, a thousand ways, make friends to you of the *mammon of iniquity*, such friends as would receive you into the eternal tabernacles, you let every opportunity slip.

Ah, be wiser then, beloved, for the future, lay hold of every advantage to seize on christian perfection, and since the same pains will suffice to make you perfect Christians, content not yourselves with being imperfect ones. Fast, pray, give alms, and frequent the holy sacraments. But lose not the benefit of them through your own mismanagement. No, if you have money to spare, make friends, by your alms-deeds of the *mammon of iniquity*. Let not worldly affairs engross all your time from prayer and works of mercy; but employ some part of it, with due attention and intention, and thus make friends of that *mammon of iniquity*: Fast with a penitential devotion, mortify your flesh, and make friends of another *mammon of iniquity*. Frequent the holy sacraments with all the dispositions requisite to reap perfection from them. And suffer no vanities or worldly cares to break in upon your devotion, but by renouncing them with fervour of heart and steadiness of mind, make friends of every *mammon of iniquity*, who, when you fail to this miserable world, may receive you into the eternal tabernacles. Whither I beseech GOD to lead you: In the name, &c.

SERMON

S E R M O N

On the Ninth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. LUKE xix. 45, 46.

JESUS entering into the temple began to cast out the sellers therein, and the buyers, saying to them: It is written, that my house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.

DOUBTLESS, Christians, you have most of you seen, at one time or other, in life, the indignation of a patient man wrought up to such a pitch as almost seems to border on frenzy. Imagin then you see such a one exasperated beyond measure, his cheeks glowing red, his eyes flashing fire, every vein boiling over with resentment, and every artery exerting itself in the cause of vengeance: One hand topsy-turvy all which comes in it's way, the other arm'd with a weapon to lash out of his doors the aggressors of his peace, and the insultors of his patience. Such, to a tittle, is the idea which St. Matthew and St. Mark bring to my mind of lovely JESUS, when describing his indignation against the prophaners of God's temple, they tell me that *the tables of the bankers, and the chairs of them who sold pigeons he overthrew*. But what can all this mean? JESUS in anger! The Lord of meekness in wrath! Alas, I ever thought it till now my duty, as a Christian, never to part with that inward peace, which is so necessary to keep up a strict union with God. I ever deem'd it an obligation incumbent upon me, as a priest and a pastor, to preach the same to others. And must I now, my Saviour, after so often exhorting these Christians of thine to learn of thee, *because thou art meek and humble of heart*, must I shew thee to them in an act of indignation; shew thee to them for a pattern of resentment? Hast thou not told us, *Blessed are the meek*? How then shall meekness be reconciled with indignation? How? Christ has plainly taught you, by the mouth of his prophet: *Be angry, and sin not*. To the frailties of a private sinner, who is not incorrigible, the best resentment which can be shewn is the tenderness of compassionate treatment. Nay, every sinner, whether public or private, who is not inflexibly such, is an object of our meekness; and, however just our indignation against his offences may be, nothing can justify our parting with charity for the

offender, while his vices are only the breakings-out of that frailty which we share, more or less, in common with him. But where God and his honour are openly and daringly insulted, compassion for the insultor is connivance, meekness in sight of the insult is impiety, and the heart which can bear the Author of all glory to be ingloriously treated, without boiling over with indignation, is incapable of that divine love, which the latent ardour of a truly christian meekness begets.

Patience, though it be infinit, must glow with indignation, when the perversity of the offenders knows no end of abusing it. Our God and Saviour, beloved, is none of those turbulent spirits, who take delight in wrath, run in search of matter of offence, and are pleased with opportunities of resentment. No: As his prophet *Isaiab* foretold of him, he is all meekness, clemency and goodness. Nay, mercy is his darling attribute, the most natural operation of his soul. *His mercies*, says the prophet, *are above all his works*. In fact, we see how ready he is, not only to forgive, but excuse the grossest of crimes committed against his laws, when not done in open defiance of the deity. Thus when the woman was brought to him to pronounce sentence against her for adultery, he not only forgives her upon condition of future amendment, but even excuses her by alledging the human frailty, common to her and her accusers. And thus he not only pardons the *Magdalen* her many sins, but even alledges the greatness of her present love as a sufficient atonement for her former frailty. But when his majesty is insolently stared in the face by impiety, and glaring sacrilege presumes to level at the glory of his throne; it becomes his merciful meekness to give up the profaners of his dignity to the utmost rigour of his avenging equity. When God, who is Lord and proprietor of the whole earth, has reserved to himself but a few little mansions in it for his special habitation, and given the rest up to his creatures to possess, the honour of his God-head is concern'd to maintain himself in them undisturb'd, un insulted, to see that his homage be there performed, with all due splendour and decorum, and not to suffer any indignities to be offered him there with impunity. Seize then, my God, seize the rod of thy wrath. Does man-kind

kind treat thee every-where else with neglect: Teach them, at least, to reverence thee in thy temples, in the mansions of thy chusing. Permit them not audaciously to turn thy sacred houses of prayer into stews, dens of thieves and rendezvous of riot. If so many benefits received will not win them to love thee, learn them, at least, by stripes to shew thee respect. O, beloved Christians, you as well as I must be sensible that it has ever been customary with the Almighty Goodness, not to reek vengeance on his people without first founding, from a distance, the march of his coming wrath to give them the timely warning to flee it. Behold then, at present, I, his minister, miserable as I am, stand here this day to sound the alarm of GOD's approaching fury, by shewing you in his name the outrages he suffers in the prophanation of his Churches; that you on your side, using for the future, so much the more reverence in proportion to the indecencies you have heretofore been guilty of in them, may prevail upon him, by your amendment, to turn aside those thunderbolts of destruction with which his anger is already, perhaps, arm'd against this nation, this city, and, may be, this very congregation. And this, I dare hope, you will readily come into, when once I have convinced you, as I now propose to do, of these three familiar truths.

- I. That every irreverence shewn to the places of divine worship is an excessive breach of good-manners.
- II. It is an enormous ingratitude: *And*
- III. It is a manifest proof of gross infidelity.

"Ah! It is even so, truly, my GOD, this place is holy, and we know it not. Holiness then becomes thy house to the length of days. Pardon us then the past irreverences our ignorance has caused, and give us so holily to demean ourselves henceforth in it, that we may there receive all the ineffable effects of thy communicative goodness."

I. One would almost think it impossible, was it not an undeniable fact, that irreverence should creep into the places of divine worship in a nation, a town, and an age so polish'd, so refined as what we live in. Is not this the age in which good-breeding is so nicely insisted on, that every the least indecorum is eyed with indignation? Is not *England* now become the academy of politeness? And what town is there now extant in which manners are sited to a greater refinement than in *London*? Let but the least unseemly deportment escape from a young gentleman, or lady, at a visit or assembly, what confusion shall they not be cover'd with; how hard shall they find it to obtain pardon from the

company, or even to forgive themselves; and how exposed are they to be ridiculed, as vulgar, as stupid, and ignorant of the world? How unaccountably surprising then is it not, that all good-manners should be left at the church door? Ah, Christians! For shame, exhaust not all your breeding in a ball or a drawing room: Confine not your whole stock of complaisance to a visit, or a compliment. Carry a little of it with you to church: In a word, when you go to the house of GOD, take yourselves with you. You are most of you well-born, you are well-educated, you can all of you be good-manner'd when you please; be so then in the respect you shew to GOD. For if your maker deserves not your complaisances, who can be worthy of them?

When *Abraham* was about to make his son *Isaac* bleed, in a generous sacrifice to GOD, the Scripture takes notice that before he made him bend his knee to wait the stroke, which was to part his body from his soul, he tied him fast. But why? The obedient son was as ready to give-up his life to the pleasure of Heaven, as the complying father was to yield the only joy of his life at the beckon of the Almighty donor? What need then was there of cords, of ropes, of ligatures? Why, the reason was, say the sacred expositors, that the sacred victim falling might not fall in a posture discomposed, or unfitting a Sacrifice made to the GOD of all order and decency. "The Patriarch, says a reverend interpreter, was fearful lest some involuntary motion of the victim should disturb the reverence proper to so great a sacrifice." O, Christians, was I to beseech you to try in church to check those irreverences which escape you without deliberate consent, and often against your will, such as loud coughing, sneezing, hawking, and I know not what besides, what more should I do than intreat you to use at least the same respect while the son of GOD is offer'd up in sacrifice to him, which *Abraham* made use of in sacrificing his beloved? what should I ask more of you than to treat those sacred houses of prayer, where the great King of kings dwells as in his palace, just with as much decency and reverence as the very *Turks* make use of in their mosque at *Lamecca*, where the corse, or, rather should I say the infamous skeleton, of *Mahomet* lies rotting in state.

However, beloved Christians, what I ask is far more practicable: It is what requires little pains, no great conquest, nay scarce any struggle; unless you think, and that I dare say you will blush to own, that it is a hard matter to be commonly civil. For in short I mean to exhort you not to leave behind you at the church-door that decent good-breeding which you have been taught to practice towards one-another by your parents, your tutors, and masters. Stand at least in the presence of JE-

SUS CHRIST, at the foot of the Throne of GOD, in the face of his altars with such a modest reserve, as you would think but proper to make use of in the presence-chamber of a prince or other great personage. Now I very much doubt, nay rather I very much believe you would hardly take the liberty in the presence of such a one to giggle, to tattle to other persons, or turn your restless eyes this way and that; to take and give snuff, to loll, lean, stretch yourselves or indulge any of those unbecoming motions which the walls of every church if animated would blush at. How then can you reconcile them with good-breeding in the house of GOD, if they cannot be deem'd such in the presence of a mortal? Surely the Almighty is not sunk so low in your esteem as to deserve less from you than your sovereign, nay a common gentleman of your own equals.

II. But lest I should offend your delicacy by being too severe on this point let us proceed. Was it not true that the sacred places of divine worship are respectable from the principle of good-manners, gratitude obliges you to honour them. Why is it you all so partially respect your own nation, town, or the house where you were born, but because there you first drew your breath at freedom. It is the benefit you received there biases you with so much foolish and unjust prejudice in favour of your own native country or town, to despise if not to hate every other, set in competition with that. O Christians! how can you then without shuddering with horror reflect, that there is no place on earth you have received so many and great benefits in as the house of GOD, and yet that there is no place treated with greater indignity than the house of GOD? You were born, you are very sensible of it, odious to Heaven, enemies to the Almighty and exiles from paradise. How, how were you reinstated in your birth-right? Where were you restored to your freedom? In what place were you given back to GOD and GOD to you? 'Twas at the sacred Font of baptism. You were all baptised in the Church or baptised with the sacred waters brought from thence? Hurl'd by the impetuosity of your passions into actual sin, you have fallen since your baptism from the grace you first received. Ah could you but have seen! Could you but have heard! Then every part of nature incensed at your baseness glowing with eagerness to revenge the cause of GOD upon your head, was loudly calling on Heaven for vengeance on your sins. The glory of the Angels mourned for you, while hell was fill'd with grim rejoicings at your ruin. To such a miserable plight did sin reduce you. Whence then, O whence did the first sunshine break forth to disperse the thick array of mischiefs threatening you? Go, Christians, go but into church,

cast an eye on the sacred tribunals of penance there and they will remind you, it was in the house of GOD that, casting off your uncleanness by a penitential confession you were admitted to pardon, re-admitted to grace. Look on the sacred Crucifix, the pictures of the blessed Virgin and other ensigns of grace; they will remind you of the inspirations, the good thoughts and many other blessings you have received in church. View the sacred altar: It is that which has dispensed to you so many divine blessings to console you; it is in that holy tabernacle that your Saviour JESUS vouchsafes to be lodged, to feed and cherish you with his precious body and blood. And it is within the walls of that temple that one day the solemn dirge will be said for the repose of your soul. In a word, there is no spot, no bit of timber, or single stone or brick in that edifice, that will not witness against you the benefits you have received and may receive from thence, and the irreverences or respect you there testify. Can you then in a place so rich in favours and courtesies for you, have the heart to insult the GOD it is consecrated to, the GOD who there presides for your benefit and comfort? O ungrateful mortals, do you never imagin you see and hear your JESUS with pallid lips hanging from the cross to which your iniquities nail'd him, the cross on which he would be exalted to exalt your hearts to him in reverential prayer: Do you never, I say, amidst your irreverences, think you, hear him reproaching you, as once he did the *Jews*. "If I have done you good, *If I have spoken well*, for what one of my good offices do you stone me with your irreverences, *why do you strike me* not on the cheek, but to the heart with your indignities? If it be written as you know it is, that *my house is a house of prayer*, why and for what offence of mine do you insult me to my face by making it a *den of thieves*? If I injure, dear-loved souls of my own purchase, if I injure you by dwelling on the altar for your food and support, expell me from your churches, expell me from your hearts: But if I do you nothing but good, if I say to you nothing but good, if I offer and mean to you nothing but good? *why, why do you strike me?*

When *Alaric* the barbarian had taken *Rome* by storm, before he suffer'd himself to be carried in triumph to the capitol to be crown'd as a conqueror, whither could you think he went? It was to the *Basilican* church of *St. Peter*. And at the door of this, he who before at the head of his troops conquer'd all *Rome*, now against all his army with sword in hand stood the great protector of this holy tho' little part of *Rome*. In it was all the treasure and people of *Rome* who could take refuge there; and thither the avarice of the conquerors led them in multitudes to massacre and plunder.

plunder. But *Alaric* placing himself before the principal gate, brandishing his sword and exalting his voice: "Avaunt, he cries, avaunt, presumptive braver: He who means not to feel the edge of *Alaric's* sword let him draw back. *Rome* is conquered; but this part of *Rome* is superior to conquest." Thus stood this brave barbarian a bulwark against his own army, himself the *asylum* of the church as the church was the *asylum* of *Rome*, too generous to bear that the Lord of hosts should remain in the capitol of the world without a palace. Ah! Too true is it, dear slighted redeemer, that some times thou art treated with more reverence by barbarians than by Catholics! An *Alaric* amidst the pride and hurry of victory could have the thought and the heart not only to leave thy sanctuary unpolluted but even to defend it: And yet thy Christians want the heart to reverence it and can only remember to bring thither indignities, indevotion, nay, O horrible excess, to bring thither sins! Yes, Christians in thy very temples, are not afraid of sinning.

But what do I say: To such a pass are we come that the ministers of God, in horror of these abuses are reduced to change their invectives into whispers. God himself might be in some sense content, if Christians would stop at sinning in his temple themselves; but the worst is they study to make others sin, and to whisper one truth with St. *John Chrysostom* in a language less known, *si quis matronam vitare intendit, hunc locum maxime idoneum existimat*. O female innocence and modesty! Who shall be able to guard you from assaults, where your devotion is made your snare? Alas! In what words shall I hint safety to you where the subject is so delicate? But out, truth: For out you must. It is too bare-faced to be conceal'd. If St. *Jerom* could speak it, why shall I be afraid to repeat it? Such is the impiety of our age, that "it is almost safer for beautiful women to go to an assembly than to church." Yes O devout sex. The church is become dangerous too. There enter too many besiegers of virtue to afford you much safety there. Witness at the fashionable hours of prayer, the ogles, the winks, the smiles, the nods and other impertinent Grimaces your piety is disturb'd with by conceited wretches, instruments of *Satan*, who come more to pervert your hearts than to convert their own. You go to nourish your souls with the body of your Lord: You go with the sacred thirst of embalming your innocence with his precious blood. But, ah! believe me, the least of encrease of that iniquity which now introduces to the very foot of the altar objects to awake and inflame the passions, will make it necessary for us priests to dissuade you as much from going to churches as to theatres: Nay more. For on the stage we see discountenanced and ridiculed the very vices which are practised

in church, to stare your virtue out of countenance.

And yet on the other hand let me tell you, O females, a little less ornament: A little less gaiety of dress would suit some of you much better? I do not mean to accuse your purity of intention of any defect. I dare believe your view is only to adapt your dress to your condition. But still pardon me that I ask you: If the pert misbehaviour of others betrays to you the mischief occasion'd to their souls by your gaudy appearances; is it not quite cruel in you not to remove the ruin with the help of a veil over your graces? Hear and tremble, St. *Paul* that great master of the faithful tells you that every woman praying with her head uncover'd defiles her Head. Now what sort of churches were they in St. *Paul's* time? Why, Poor, narrow, low, miserable, hovels, like this you are in! or dark, dismal, damp and homely caves. But worse in this that the holy persons who frequented them, seldom enter'd them without being beset by butchers; they prayed with the knife at their throat: And were always in prospect of never going out but to be hal'd to the boiling cauldron, the flaming pile or the gibbet, there to be worried out of life by force of the severest Torments. Still with all this the apostle would have the women not appear there uncover'd: Shall it then be lawful in our churches, where if there is equal poverty there is not equal danger, shall it, I say, be decent for women to appear with neck and breasts little better than uncover'd? If they must be veil'd in the very presence of tortures, shall they be uncover'd where impudicity lurks in ambush? But dress as gaily as you please, women of the world, and learn this for your comfort, that going in pomp to church to ask pardon for your sins you only commit fresh ones, that going in a gaudy trim to pray souls out of purgatory you are more likely to drag souls into hell; and to gain in a word a great name in those regions of darkness. For if, as St. *Cyprian* says, "he is worse than a devil who suffers himself to be smitten by the looks of a woman in church;" what title shall we give to you, who are the vain-glorious Smiters?

St. *John Chrysostom*, meeting a lady of *Antioch* dress'd in a splendid manner and surveying her attentively: Whither, O lady, says the prelate, are you going so finely dress'd. To church, answer'd she. To church, replies the Saint! Is there a ball then at church? Tell me in favour what business have you at church? Business! To offer vows to God to be sure, and to pay him my adorations. Ah rather, vain thing own, that you are going to introduce a strange Idol to rival the deity. Come speak plainly for once, what do you propose to do in church? Is it to ask pardon for your sins? Ah where then are the penitential cloaths, the ensigns of sorrow, the pale cheeks, the weeping eyes, the

dismay and the confusion which are wont to accompany a conscious criminal to the bar of his judge? When was it ever known for an offender to humble himself to ask pardon with an air of triumph? "can it become you, says *Tertullian*, to ask forgiveness for your crimes in silks and velvets?" To what purpose then do you go? Pardon my inquisitiveness, and impute to my surprise this new, and perhaps troublesome question, if I too often repeat it to please you; why do you go to church? I go to hear mass. That is you would say you go to assist at the sacrifice of the son of God offered to his eternal father on the altar. Is it not so? But can you seriously think a gaudiness of dress suitable to one who assists at such a sacrifice. A pretty figure truly the *Magdalen* would have made on *Mount Calvary*, had she stood at the foot of the Cross, all gaiety, all gaudiness, and all dress, as too many of your sex often are, at the same unbloody sacrifice in the mass. O pious sex! O flower of Christianity! O dearest hopes of paradise! Say, for you may speak it without a self-condemning blush: If these indignities are daily practised in almost every place of worship you can go to in this land; can there be a greater excess of ill-manners: Can there be a more barefaced ingratitude?

III. But hitherto, and I blush for it, I have treated these indignities with too much formality. Away then with complaisance, where such excesses are the subject: Excesses not to be wiped off but with tears of blood, not to be treated with detestation enough. Let the vulgar be shocked at adulteries, thefts, and other crimes which human frailty too often hurries human nature into in other places. I too can pity, and be sorry for them: But I know not how: Not the worst of crimes which human Weakness can fall into in a prophane place, shocks me so much as an irreverence committed in the sanctuary of God. For those I consider as the bleeding effects of a natural proneness to sin, which Heaven itself often wisely permits the very elect to fall under, that they may rise by humility to a higher degree of spiritual perfection. But a careless, disrespectful behaviour, in the temples of God, is a much shrewder mark of a corrupt heart. There is something in it beyond frailty; there is perversity, nay, infidelity, gross infidelity. It is an oracle of the Holy-Ghost, that faith and respect to places of divine worship are inseparable. *Thy testimonies*, says the Psalmist, *are made exceedingly credible: Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for length of days.* You cannot imagin that the bare entering now and then into a church, is sufficient to make Christians and Catholics of you. The very *Heathens* went into those subterraneous vaults, which served for churches to the infant church: But going there,

only to disturb the devotion of the faithful, what did they shew themselves, but outrageous infidels. The heretics, some ages ago, enter'd into the churches of *Greece*, of *Italy*, of *France* and *Germany*: And, but a few ages ago, broke into your own sacred temples in this kingdom. And went in, forthwith, to reform them, that is, to pull down crucifixes, to pollute the sacred vessels, to overthrow God's Altars, to destroy every ensign of piety, to enrich themselves with the plunder of the poor's treasure, and turn the houses of prayer into *Dens of Thieves*: But did this speak them Catholics, or not rather perverse and rebellious miscreants? Who then will, henceforth, be senseless enough, to flatter himself with being a Catholic, because carried once in his infancy, to church, to receive the holy character of a Christian, in baptism, he has never gone thither since, perhaps, but to defile it's walls with the sins he has committed within them, to dishonour it's ceremonies with his irreverences, to abuse it's sacrifices with his in devotion, and to disturb God's people, and slight God's ministers by his levity and licentious behaviour?

Tertullian, makes this apology for the Christians refusing to adore the idols of the Heathens. "You, O *Gentils*, says he, punish the constancy of Christians, who despise your false gods; while, you-yourselves despise those false gods by making their temples the rendezvous of your libidinous intrigues." O prophaners of Catholic churches, what then do you do, by your irreverences, but arm the tongues of heretics, with the like invectives, against the holy faith you profess? What if they should say: The papists pretend to acknowledge Christ for their master, "yet treat him with indignity in the places of his worship: Yet, brand us with the name of heretics, for only dishonouring his doctrines. If we are heretics for not believing him to be bodily present on the altar, what title shall they deserve who believe him there, and yet treat him with irreverence?" What, what, O irreverent Catholics, would you be able to answer?

O *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, heretics of all sorts, who glory in the desolation of churches, if Catholics can be irreverent in the temples of Christ, the sacrileges you commit in plundering God's sanctuaries, shall henceforth be look'd upon as homages; one injury of yours done to Christ shall exempt him from many insults he daily receives from his followers. And it will be the lesser evil of the two, to banish him at once from his own house, than to insult him so frequently in it. O Priests, O Ministers of God, you who have the authority of opening or shutting, if Catholics will not put an end to their irreverences in the House of God, if they will persist to convert the house of prayer to a den of thieves,

thieves, shut out the prophaners, lock up the church doors, and let them go practise their levities upon change? O, but they'll come no more to church. No matter: Says a grave author, if they are guilty of neglect, they will not be guilty of sacrilege. Well, but what will become of the Almighty's court? O, the Almighty will readily spare such attendance. Less indignity would it be for GOD to have no court at all than to be insulted by his courtiers. But, what will become of the poor souls? Poor souls indeed! Souls, rather devils, say I, and elder brothers of *Lucifer*, who dare thus attack the living GOD, in the only places he has chosen upon earth for an asylum against human impiety. But it is time to conclude, lest a hurry of zeal should force me to utter what discretion forbids.

"But why do you grow warm upon it?" There is no occasion for warmth in this congregation, where so much modesty, decency and devotion prevail. True, Christians, you say right: There is no need of warmth here: The remedies to these evils will be more useful. And woe to every-one of you who have authority to apply them, if you neglect to do so. If parents watch not over their children, masters over their servants, and every-one of you over yourselves. If I am warm on this subject, what is it warms me but the zeal for your eternal and temporal welfare, to which nothing, perhaps, is more opposit than irreverence in church. If we speak of the Eternal, *Isaiah* has told you, *He who acts evil in the land of holies shall not see the glory of the Lord.* And, St. Paul, after him, *If any one shall profane the temple of God, the Lord will destroy him.* And, St. Cyprian, after both, "Desperate is the case of him who offends his sovereign to his face: That offender is without excuse who commits a crime in the very sight of his judge." Now, what can we infer from all this, but that there is scarce any hope of salvation for such as disrespect the sanctuary of GOD, and that he stands little chance of being admitted into the heavenly mansions, who misbehaves in the earthly tabernacles of the Lord.

But, alas, the threats of eternal evil are apt to make but little impression: Hear then, O Christians, the temporal evils with which the wrath of GOD threatens the prophaners of his temples. *Sharpen, says he, by the mouth of JEREMIAH, sharpen the arrows, fill the quivers against Babylon to destroy it: For the revenge of our Lord is the revenge of his temple.* When other crimes are to be chastised, the Almighty seems to content his vengeance with one single arrow, and that often a blunted one; but when irreverences to his Churches and Altars call for his avenging justice, his quivers are fill'd, and every arrow is pointed

with plagues and famines, and fires and floods, and wars and earthquakes, and every human woe. *Sharpen, sharpen, he cries to his instruments, sharpen the arrows, fill the quivers: For the revenge of the Lord is the revenge of his temple.* To what, to what else shall we ascribe the plagues, the frequent epidemics, burnings of towns, famines, wars, and other calamities, which have, in latter ages, laid desolate this unhappy, faithless land and city; to what else, I say, so much as to the sacrileges committed in and against the Churches and Altars of GOD? O, that this handful of Christians and Catholics, at least, would but learn from the fatal effects of impiety in their ancestors, to redouble their respect to thy sanctuaries, Lord, that they might avert the impending ruin hanging over the heads of them, their countrymen and posterity.

Thus calls the GOD of Hosts, in his indignation, on his servant EZECHIEL. *Ezechiel! See'st thou the inormous abominations which the House of Israel has done, to force me from my sanctuary?* Yes, Lord, I see five-and-twenty young men with their backs to the altar, their faces to the door, to view the beauties of the rising sun in the East, to amuse themselves, in a word, with every object but thy glory. That is not all, O prophet, look again, turn thy eyes round and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. Yes, yes, Lord, I see amorous smiles, ogles, admirations; I see idolatries: Every object of vanity, sin and impertinence is adored, Thou, the only object of adoration, art left undared. Well, thou has't seen, now therefore hear. *I therefore will act in my wrath. My eye shall not spare, I will shew no mercy, and when they cry out aloud in my ears, I will not give a favourable attention.* Shall I forever look on a tame spectator of the injuries offered to me in person? No, no, let justice succeed my long-abused mercy. Now, therefore, *I will act in my wrath.* What will not the prophaners then try to do to appease my anger, they will mourn in sackcloth and ashes, but in vain, they will fast, but in vain, they will beseech, but all in vain. *My eye shall have no pity, I will shew no mercy.* They will send sighs of repentance to my throne, they will implore my clemency, and make vows to me for pardon. But, all to no purpose, for, *when they cry aloud in my ears I will not give a favourable attention.* They will ask of me health, *I will not bear them.* They will ask children, *I will not bear them.* They will ask peace, plenty, riches, mercy, still *I will not bear them.* What uncivil, ungrateful, faithless wretches, shall they prophane my sanctuary, make my house, which is the house of prayer, a den of thieves, and after trampling on every grace sue for fresh ones. No, justice demands that they be condemn'd

denn'd to feel the effects of my fury after so often exasperating my patience. *I therefore will act in my wrath.*

O, beloved Christians, to charge the Almighty with severity for chastising us for such gross and repeated irreverences would be an excess of impiety. But O, how much greater an excess of insensibility would it not be, after being warned of his chastisements to repeat your irreverences to him in his very sanctuary. Take warning then in time; remem-

ber who presides in the sacred churches you enter into; and behave yourselves accordingly. And, Thou, GOD of goodness, graciously listen to us, who are here praying to thee. Forgive the sins of thy people, shew them the good way in which they may walk, and give glory to this place, by transferring us, through the grace we here receive, to the glory thou has't reserved for us in thy eternal tabernacles. Which I beseech, *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Tenth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. LUKE xviii 10, 14.

Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican: I say to you, this man went down to his house justified more than he.

WHAT shall we say, Christians, to the different success of these two men's prayer? prayer we all know is excellent in itself; and yet you see, it does not always abound with the same fruits. Here are two men of very opposite characters, at one and the same time, offering up their prayers to GOD: The one a *Pharisee*, a strict observer of the law: No extortioner, no cheat, no adulterer, but liberal to others and severe to himself; in short, what you would call a good sort of a man: The other a *Publican*, that is, a public sinner, one who has made it his profession to live by usury, oppression of the poor, and public fraud, in a word, what you would call a common cheat. Now, if you were to be the judges of these two men; would you not be much more favourably inclined to the former than to the latter? Not all the repentance of the *Publican* would intitle him, in your esteem, to an equal share of grace with the *Pharisee*. No, you would cry, this *Pharisee* is an honourable man, a rich man, and a man who knew no other use in riches than that of doing good. And then how very humble is he not, with all his excellence, so far from assuming to himself any vain glory from his good life, he gives all the praise of it to his Maker, to whom it is due: GOD! *I give thee thanks that I am not like the rest of men.* Shall such a faint of a man then be put upon a footing with a sorry creature, who, by his own confession, is a wicked liver, and who has nothing more to say in his justification than, GOD! *be merciful to me a*

sinner? No, surely it cannot be done without injustice. Such, beloved, such would be your way of thinking. But, ah, my GOD! How different are thy thoughts from our thoughts. *As the Heavens are bigger than the earth, so are thy ways bigger than our ways, and thy thoughts than our thoughts.* GOD did not only consider this poor *Publican* in an equally advantageous light with the self-approving *Pharisee*, but even gave him the preference, and sent him home justified more than the *Pharisee*. Ah, Christians! How shall we unfold this mystery, this real effect of GOD's impartial goodness wrapt in so much seeming partiality? O man, to all appearance, extremely religious, offers his petition to GOD, and that a long one too, and seemingly solid, and is rejected: Another, a noted sinner, proffers his prayer, and that a short and seemingly empty one, and yet is heard. O impartial bounty of GOD! Don't you see yet, beloved, whence proceeds the different success which the prayers of these two men met with? Prayer in itself, as we have already observed, is excellent. But, alas, what is prayer, or any other good-work, without an upright intention, which is the soul of every virtue. This it was which made the repenting *Publican's* prayer so acceptable to GOD; and the want of this which rendered that of the *Pharisee* so fruitless. Have a care then, Christians, of what you do. How many good actions do you lose all the merit of, for want of a perfect purity of intention? And how many indifferent actions in life which a little purity of intention might render truly christian, do you render sinful by the corrupt motives you do them with! In short, the very reason why you are all such very imperfect Christians is not, perhaps, so much for want of taking pains to be good ones, as for want of sanctifying your pains

pains by a purity of intention, free from all sinister or mean motives. You will probably be fully convinced of this at the conclusion of this discourse, in which I propose to shew you.

- I. In what this perfect purity of intention consists: *And,*
- II. How necessary it is to render your actions acceptable in the sight of GOD.

“O Fountain of all purity, our Saviour Christ, accept this act of ours, in which we all too unite to seek and follow thee: O grant in this, and every other future action of our lives, our hearts may be quite clean, and all our works be pleasing in thy sight.”

I. It is to very little purpose for us to acknowledge the being of GOD, and the power of his Christ, unless we act with a religious, intire dependence upon them. To believe in Christ will avail us but little, and in vain are we Christians, unless, in consequence of what we believe, we practise all those virtues which Christ taught us. Now, the bare, external practice of those works which our divine Master has enjoined us by word and example, is not sufficient to make them christian virtues, and, therefore, though we should do all he did, and all he bid us do, if we do not do it with a true spirit we may, not only be void of all virtue, grace and merit, but even be full of imperfection and vice. Who could be a more strict observer of the law than our *Pharisee*? And yet, all his religious observance was not sufficient to render him a religious man in the sight of GOD; nor to make his prayer, though a good action in itself, acceptable to GOD, who regards not the actions we do, so much as the motive with which we do them. He pray'd, but pray'd from a principle of vain-glory: His prayer was long, but his intention was not good, and therefore was he dismissed, by the Almighty, less justified than he whose prayer was short, but whose intention was pure and flowing from a heart bent upon GOD. *Not all who cry to me, Lord, Lord, says our blessed Redeemer, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but such only as do the will of my Father who is in Heaven.*

Hence, beloved, you see that even prayer though one of the first and great duties of a Christian, and in itself extremely grateful to GOD, loses all its efficacy, without it be purified with a perfect compliance with GOD's will. And how can you be said to do the will of GOD in any thing you do, if the principal ingredient of your actions be wanting, which is a pure and upright intention?

Now, this purity of intention consists in nothing other than an ardent desire of fulfilling the will of

GOD in all we do, without the least disposition towards gratifying our own passions or appetites, at the risk of dishonouring or displeasing him. In short, it is the emotion of a heart which seeks GOD in all things, is directed by his will, and wishes nothing but with reference to his blessed pleasure. But, O my Saviour! How often does this perverse, delusive and sinful imagination of ours, lead us into actions quite opposit to thy glory, under a vain pretext of seeking it! How often do we pretend to follow thee at the very time we are running the widest from thee! And how often do we falsely flatter ourselves, that thou art our guide while we are actually in rebellion against thee!

Go but to chapel, a few weeks successively, and how many persons shall you not find whose faces, with often seeing them, grow familiar to you: You are as sure to find them at their hour and place as the priest at the altar; and many of them in full as conspicuous a light. What a glorious example of piety would not these be to others, and what treasures of grace might they not heap to themselves, from such a religious assiduity, if their intention was the pure love of GOD's worship? But, ah, how many of them are led to public prayers by custom, caprice or indolence, without any religious motive at all, if not with a very corrupt one! Some go for amusement, and to pass away an hour; some to shew their person and dress; others to make observations on those of their acquaintance. In short, many go to see and censure all who come there, and many to be seen and to gain applause. Is it Christ then who draws such persons to church? Ah, rather is it greatly to be feared that Christ has the least, if any, share in their coming there. But, beware yourself of judging rashly, you'll cry, perhaps, well, I will so. Let me then ask you, Christians, you, who go so often to public prayers, how comes it that you are not better Christians than many of those who go less. If the honour of GOD is your only intention in going there, why should one little punctilio of dress suffice to keep you away sometimes? How dare you approach to the altar in a pet against your neighbour, and return thence without the least disposition towards a reconciliation? And how comes it, while you are there, you behave so indecently; make so many uncharitable remarks; are so bigotted to the most conspicuous places; so peevish to all about you, if you are crowded; and, if you have room, are so taken up with making and returning bows and curtsies. Are you never desirous of drawing the eyes of the congregation from GOD to fix them on your persons, your dresses, or your extraordinary behaviour? Why then do you take so much pains to deck yourselves so sprucely, or to put on so many affected airs and graces. And, O, my Lord, how often does the

the least noise, the least stir draw the ears, the eyes and the hearts of all here, from thy Majesty in the tabernacle to attend to the most impertinent objects! And can you then, beloved, flatter yourselves from such behaviour at church, that you are led thither by the pure intention of honouring God? No, surely your intention must be to serve some meaner end. Or, at least, your motive of serving God must be very strongly allay'd with earthly views. And yet, if God be not your sole end in going there, how much better would it not be for you to stay away than to profane God's sanctuary, by making it little better than a den of thieves. Hear what your angry Lord says, to all such as presume to approach that holy place with an unclean heart and sinister intention. "Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination to me, the calling of your assemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity even in the solemn meeting. And, therefore, when you spread forth your hands I will hide my eyes from you: Nay, when you make many prayers I will not hear you."

What then, is it unlawful to go to church often? Yes, with a sinister intention it is a crime to go at all. But to go with a pure intention, with an upright, clean heart, intent only upon doing honour to God, is a duty, an essential duty; and you cannot go too often. The Almighty justly expects you should join with the rest of your fellow-creatures in returning him public thanks, for the infinit favours you have received and daily do receive from him. But then he expects that your worship should be the worship of the heart. *My son*, says he, *give me your heart*. Let your heart be wholly intent upon me; and when you serve me make not my honour the cloak or the tool of any earthly, vicious purpose. Ah, Christians! this is the chief ingredient which can render your actions truly acceptable in the sight of God. Let no mean, earthly views then destroy the merit of your religious works, and render them abominable in the eyes of him, "and who, as *St. Augustin* says, regards not what you do, but with what intention you do it." Fast yourselves to skeletons, give all you have in alms-deeds, they will profit you nothing; they will only gain you God's eternal displeasure, if instead of doing them for his honour and glory, you basely seek glory, or interest, or applause to yourselves. In a word, your best and most laudable actions, those very actions, which, through the merits of Christ, would be able to lift you to an eternal crown of glory, if you would but sanctify them with a pure intention of serving God, shall, on the contrary, be of no manner of fruit to you if you neglect to make use of this intention; and shall be the means of perdition to you, if your motive be vicious. On the other side your most indifferent actions in life, such as your eating,

drinking, sleeping, moving and breathing, might all become fruitful means of eternal life, if you would but study to make them such, by offering them up with a clean heart, free from selfish, earthly motives, to the honour of the divine Majesty. And what would it cost you more to add this holy intention to your actions than to do them without it. Ah, dearest Fellow-Christians, be wise then, and lose not the immense treasures of eternal rewards which you might heap to yourselves, by offering up to God that heart which you received from him, and doing all you do for his sake, who has done so much for yours. *If thy heart be wise*, says the Holy Ghost in the PROVERBS, *my heart shall rejoice, even mine.** If God then, whose happiness no ways depends upon yours, who, from all eternity is infinitely, unalterably blessed, whether you live or die, is still so gracious to declare to you, that a heart wisely directed to and guided by his will shall make him rejoice, can you be so perverse to your divine Benefactor, Father and Friend, as to refuse him that heart. No, surely you cannot. Every brute beast would cry out shame on your ingratitude: Nay, the very stones in the streets should reproach you of your folly. Why were you created, and why do you live, but that by pleasing God in this life, you may be raised to the enjoyment of him forever in the next? And, how can you expect that any of your actions should be pleasing to him which are done out of any other motive than that of pleasing him? Do you not see then the absolute necessity of purifying your actions, with a good intention, in order to make christian virtues of them? Have patience then a little longer, and I'll make it visible to you.

II. It is very justly that the Fathers of the Church compare a good intention to gold, which gives a lustre to every thing it is applied to. Nay, some of them have compared it to the rod of *Midas*, which, according to the fabulous accounts of the *Heathens*, converted every thing into gold which it did but touch. Ah, Christians! without any fable or fiction, such is the nature of a pious intention, it renders every the most insignificant action of life, to which it is applied, an act of piety. Nay, the most unwarrantable actions, if they are done through invincible ignorance with a good intention, become equally meritorious with a good-work. Whereas, on the contrary, the best of our deeds degenerate into downright vices if our intention be evil. And why so, but because a bad intention, like a pest or a canker-worm, corrodes and corrupts all before it.

In fact, we see that God, without regard to the actions we do, considers only our motive in acting,

* *Prov.* xxiii. 15.

and even takes the will for the very action. *David*, forgetting how much his hands had been dipt in blood, was desirous of building a temple to God. But God, who delights not in blood, would not accept of the work, and yet, in consideration of the piety of his heart, he vouchsafed to be pleased with the offering, and commended his design, as we read in the seventh chapter of the second book of *Kings*. For, "God, as *St. Gregory* observes, looks not to our abilities, but to our intention: He weighs the design and not the action; and, therefore, whatever you design to do, that he imputes to you as if you already had done it," whether good or bad. Hence our divine Saviour tells us, that *he who barely looks at a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery in his heart*. And hence, on the contrary, does the same divine Lord prefer the two mites of the poor widow, thrown into the treasury in the temple, to all the large sums which others threw in. "Because, says *St. Jerom*, the Lord regards not the things which are offer'd, but the will of those who offer them."

It is for this very reason, that your heavenly Master commands you in the sixth of *St. Matthew* to pray, to fast, to give alms, not with the empty, vicious motive of pleasing men, but, with the pure, the upright intention of serving God, who see'th in secret, and rewards every-one according to the motives they act upon.

Three sorts of people follow'd Christ, and listen'd to his sacred discourses. And all with different views. Some follow him to carp at his words: And these, instead of the fruits of grace, reap'd perdition from their attention, though good in itself. Some were led after him out of idle curiosity, or to be fed with his loaves and his fishes, and these, if they did not render their pursuit of him sinful, which is very much to be question'd, at least, they lost all the spiritual reward, of following Christ, for want of a pure and holy motive in doing so. Others, however, had sense enough to follow him for the sake of his divine doct'rins, and they happily render'd meritorious that very action, which was useless to some and destructive to others. So very true is it, that the motive is what gives life, or death, to all you do. And, so plainly does a good, bad, or indifferent intention, in all you undertake, render your undertakings, either virtuous, criminal, or fruitless in the sight of God.

The king of the *Jews*, and the three eastern monarchs were equally bent upon visiting Christ in *Betlehem*? But, were their intentions equally pure. No, ah, no. *Herod's* visit breath'd murder and decide, while the holy kings of the East meditated nothing but homage and adoration. No wonder then that the divine babe, who knew the hearts of

all, should wait the coming of these, in a homely stable, to bless them with his heavenly aspect, and take a long laborious journey to fly the treacherous approaches of the other. *David*, the unhappy *David*, miserably enslaved by the wantonness of *Bethsheba*, sent for *Urias*, from the camp, that he might rest himself a-while in his own house. What a deal of seeming charity was here! But, ah, Christians! Was not this charity like the treacherous kindness which you often practise to your neighbours? Yes, the event proved it so. God saw the vicious purpose of the king's heart, and therefore, despising the external benevolence of the action, withdrew his grace from him, and suffered him to fall into murder. Not all the pains you take, O women of the world, to set yourselves off, could exceed the industry of *Judith* to adorn herself, and to add all the lustre of dress to the native graces which God had given her; but was pride, or wantonness any part of her motive? Had she, in doing thus, any share of that vanity which makes you so studious to trick yourselves out, so industrious to inflame the passions of men, and so assiduous to steal from God the hearts, affections and adorations, which ought to be fix'd wholly on him? No. Her view was only to save her country, and give glory to God. And therefore, God, who regards not actions but the intention they are done with, gave a blessing to her undertaking, added charms to her person, and made her the glorious deliverer of her country.

The royal prophet *David*, whom I have so often mention'd, repented of his crimes, ask'd pardon of God, and, with humble contrition, cried out, *Peccavi Domino*, I have sinn'd against the Lord. And God, who will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, seeing the sincerity of his conversion, and knowing the upright purity of his intention, forgave him, and received him again into his grace. Ah, why then was not *Judas*, miserable *Judas*, admitted to the same favour? Was it the heinousness of his offence which put him out of the reach of God's mercy. No, no, beloved, there is no crime so great, which man can commit, but God can and is ready to forgive, if it be but repented of with a pure and sincere heart. Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes, says the Lord, by the mouth of his prophet, *ISAIAH*, and tho' your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. *Judas* repented, it is true, nay, he made restitution of the money he had taken to betray his Lord. But, that was not the chief evil of his doings; he made not restitution of his heart to God, which had been basely alienated from him for sordid lucre. He still retain'd the corrupt intention of his will. He repented not so much of having sold Christ to his enemies,

mies, as of having done it for so trivial a sum. God saw the foulness of his heart, and, therefore, rejected his repentance, and gave him up to despair.

But, O, my God! Where was the crime of *Judas* in giving up thy heavenly son, *JESUS*, to death? Was he any more than an under instrument of thy blessed, eternal purpose? Did'st not thou, from all eternity, decree he should die for our redemption? What more then did *Judas*, than fulfill thy heavenly will? Was it a crime then in him to be instrumental in compleating thy divine pleasure? No, Christians, No. The sin of *Judas* lay not in his being accessory to the death of Christ, but in the wicked motive which made him so. "We are not to mind, says *St. Augustin*, what a man does, but what intention and will he does it with. In the same fact, we find the eternal Father concern'd, in which *Judas* was engaged. And yet, while we bless and praise GOD the FATHER, we detest *Judas* for it. Both had a hand in giving Christ up to death, but from different principles. GOD the FATHER was moved to it by his infinite charity, *Judas*, by infamous treachery. Thus capable is a diversity of intention of diversifying the very same actions." Thus, says *St. Augustin*. You see then, beloved, how great a share in the merit or demerit of your actions, your intention will bear. That which in GOD was an ineffable effect of bounty, the corrupt intention of *Judas* rendered an execrable effect of baseness.

Ah, Christians! Christians! be watchful then

over yourselves. Suffer not any sinister intention to render your actions odious in the sight of GOD. Lose not the blessings and graces you may reap from every the most indifferent act of your lives, for want of sanctifying it with a holy motive. Direct your hearts to GOD, and offer up all your works, your words, and even your inmost thoughts chiefly to his glory, and let no little, empty servile purposes rob you of the merit of them. *If your hearts be wise, my heart shall rejoice even mine*, says your gracious GOD. Give GOD then the pleasure of seeing you place your pleasure in serving him. That you may, one day, reap the substantial pleasure of being rewarded by him. And by this means alone can you hope for any reward. "Whatever you do, without a good intention, will profit you nothing, says *St. Augustin*; for not what you do, but why you do it, will be imputed to you, by GOD." "Such will your work be in his sight," says *St. Isidor*, "as your motive is. Whenever, therefore, you are tempted by an evil, or fruitless intention, reject it immediately, resist it in it's infancy; yield not to the corruption of your wavering ill-disposed thoughts, but by a contrary act, lift up your Hearts to, and sanctify your intention to him." If you do this, beloved, your actions will abound with merit and grace in this life, and dispose you for the eternal rewards of the next. Which I beseech, &c. *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Eleventh SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MARK vii. 37, 36.

JESUS bath done all things well: He bath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. And he commanded them not to tell any body.

I Have often wonder'd, beloved, how Christians, Catholic Christians, who, of all people, are most intent upon recollecting the life of Christ, are so much more zealous to admire than imitate his blessed example. But, ah! All our surprise must cease, if we reflect on the extreme weakness of human nature; so apt to be carried away by whatever strikes their senses, and to overlook the substance for the shadow: Miraculous cure upon a man who was deaf and dumb, and how lavish are

the gaping spectators of their acclamations of praise! *He bath done all things well* they cry: *He bath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.* And, tho' *JESUS* himself had laid his commands upon them *not to tell any body*, so full were they of the greatness of the action, that, the more he commanded them, so much the more, a great deal, says the evangelist, *did they publish it.* One would imagin, from hence, that Christ had never wrought a miracle before; or they would have been less astonish'd at this. Whereas it is very well known to every-one, who is a little conversant in his holy life, that he had wrought many, and much greater ones. To the cure of this man he applied the medicinal assistance of spittle. And, yet he had cured one

one of a leprosy, another of a fever, by the single power of his will. He had chased the devil out of multitudes, by his word. He had free'd the *Gentil* woman, of a twelve years inveterate disease, by the single touch of his garment, and raised the ruler's daughter from death, by his sole command. And all these miracles, notwithstanding his having commanded them to be kept secret, were so blazed abroad, that he could not come into the city, for the multitudes which gather'd from all parts, to reap the benefit of his miraculous power; but was forced to keep in desert places, and, yet would they find him out, and, yet would they come to him, from all parts. It is plain then, when our Saviour wrought the miracle, register'd in this day's Gospel, it was no new thing to see him work wonders, and much greater ones, to outward appearance. Where then was the room for all these acclamations? It was a very extraordinary cure, you'll say, and something out of the common course of nature. Very true, it was so. But what then? Were not all the miracles he wrought equally so? Why then should they wonder at what they so often saw? Or, if they admired the greatness of his power, why did they give no attention to the more admirable humility, with which he accompanied the glorious works of his omnipotence? Ah! The reason is but too plain. They were outside spectators of Christ's actions, mere superficial admirers of him: In a word, Such admirers of him as too many of you are, Christians, who study, indeed, the Life of Christ; but, alas, to how little purpose! For, what greater benefit do you reap from the life and actions of Christ, which you so often read, or hear read, than these *Jews* did, who were eye-witnesses to them? Like them, you can admire and applaud the miraculous works of your Saviour, but what one of his virtues do you endeavour to imitate? But your admiration and applause are like theirs, the mere effects of sensuality; otherwise, while you attend to such of his actions, as strike your imagination and senses, you would not overlook those, which ought to affect your hearts and your understanding. Did you but attend to the history of Christ's sacred life, more with a desire of copying after him, than of gratifying an idle curiosity, you would not be more attentive to the external works, which his goodness was pleased to effect, than to the internal virtue with which he sought to conceal them. In short, at the same time as you found his power so worthy of admiration, you would think his humility as worthy your imitation. And, ah, my Saviour! Why else did'st thou set us this illustrious example, but that we might follow it! Why was't thou so desirous of concealing thy wondrous works? Thou, surely, was't not subject to suggestions of vanity? Thy

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hypostatical Innocence placed thee at an infinit distance above the reach of pride. And the empty praises of men were too infinitely beneath thy exalted nature to be able to afford thee any vain-glorious pleasure. Why, then, O why, dear Lord, was't thou so industrious to conceal the glory of thy wondrous actions from public applause? Ah! Beloved, the reason is plain, it was to set you an example of that humility, with which you ought to accompany all your actions.

Hence I gather three irrefragable truths, that humility is the foundation of all Christian virtues, that it is indispensably necessary to every Christian, and that it is productive of every means tending to salvation. That, therefore, you may go away as convinced of these truths as I already am, I shall undertake to shew,

- I. In what Christian humility consists.
- II. How impossible it is to be saved without it:
And
- III. How difficult it is to be damn'd with it:
Thus you will see the nature of this divine virtue, the necessity of it, and the advantages it brings with it.

"But ah, dear Saviour! Shew it thou to these thy loved Disciples. Give them to see the beauties of this thy favorite practice, that treading on thy steps on earth, by humbling themselves for thee, they may, one day, deserve to be exalted by thee."

I. The nature and essence of humility consist in an absolute self-depression, not merely external, but internal, and from the heart. A man may be extremely depressed, and cringing even to his inferiors, without the least degree of virtue or humility. *Adonijah*, a favorite son of *David*, was, by many years elder than *Solomon*, and, had birth-right taken place, he would have been his sovereign too: Yet, how did he cringe to his younger brother, when this took possession of the throne? With so much meanness, that a slave could not have exceeded him. But was it humility? No: He had already done his endeavours to fix that crown upon his own head, which he wanted the merit to adorn, and the soul to maintain. But no sooner was his brother, *Solomon*, set up in competition with him, than he as meanly submitted himself a vassal, as he had arrogantly raised himself a monarch: It was pusillanimity then, and meanness, not humility which made him so abject a subject to his royal brother, as he was during the rest of his life. How did *Mark Antony* debase himself to the wanton *Cleopatra*! Was it then humility which made him turn his back on the conquest of the world to rum

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after her fears? no, it was lust, errant lust, which made him prefer universal contempt to the false glory he had so much ambition for. His self-depression and meanness was vice, all over vice. But what humility could be expected from such Wretches who knew not Christ, nor thought on God. Humility was first raised into a virtue by Christ, and he himself was the first, and first and glorious example of it. For, what were all the humiliations of the very Patriarchs and prophets, but faint, imperfect sketches of that compleat humility they prophesied, and foresaw the practice of, in him.

JESUS, the Lord of all, consider'd at what a distance pride had placed mankind from God; and, therefore, purposely descended to teach them, by his divine example, to rise, by means of the opposite virtue, humility, as high as they had fallen from. And to effect this gracious purpose, the very first step he took, was an ineffable act of the most perfect humility which could be practiced. For as St. Paul observes to the PHILIPPIANS, he, *who when he was in the form of GOD, thought it no robbery to be himself, equal to GOD, exinanited himself, taking the form of a servant, made into the similitude of men, and in shape found as a man.* * It was on this same plan he built all his life and conversation, *humbling himself*, as the same Apostle bears witness, *made obedient unto death even the death of the Cross.* Worldly honours were his constant aversion, worldly contempt was his perpetual pursuit. When the Jews sought to make him their king, he fled from them into the mountains: When they sought him to condemn him to an ignominious death as a criminal, he went out to meet them. When he was transfigured by the glory of his God-head, before his eternal father, on the mount, he took with him three witnesses only, and those he bound to Secrecy: *Tell no body the vision till the son of man be risen from the dead.* But, when he sigh'd, when he groan'd, when he wept, or was subject to any other human infirmities, he took care to make them public, and required no secrecy. Even all his sufferings, in his passion, and on his Cross, so much as the being left by his divine father to the weakness of his humanity, he took care to make known to the whole world. When he pray'd, when he fasted, it was all in retirement: Humility was the only virtue he took any pains to point out in himself. Those very miracles, which his excess of charity, wrought to relieve the distressed, and to confirm his authority, *he commanded the standers by, as my text says, not to tell to any body.* But, ah! Why, dear Lord, wast thou not equally solicitous to conceal thy humility? Why, why did'st thou take so much pains to publish it? Why did'st thou say to thy disciples, *learn of*

* Phil. ii. 6. 7.

me, for I am meek and humble at heart? And when thou did'st graciously stoop to the lowly office of washing their feet, why did'st thou use so much eloquent industry to point out thy self-humiliation in a pathetic harangue? Ah, loving Saviour! Why do I ask thee, after the substantial reason thou has't given us? *I have given you an example*, says Christ, *that as I have done, so you also may do.* O infinite wisdom and goodness of JESUS! The rest of his actions and virtues he sought to conceal, because the chief object of his practice was humility. This he labour'd to publish, because humility was the chief end of his mission. For to this end alone did he descend from Heaven to lead you, O man, by the practice of a perfect humility, to that kingdom of bliss which you had basely forfeited, by an excess of pride and arrogance. How then can you be possess'd of any virtue, without following him in this, or, how can any virtue of yours be Christian where this is wanting?

The glossary, upon the third chapter of St. Matthew, very judiciously distinguishes three different degrees of humility, the *sufficient*, the *abounding*, and the *perfect*. What is understood by sufficient humility, is the paying a due sufficient submission to *superiors*, and not assuming any preference to *equals*. In this, beloved, your blessed Redeemer sets you a very eminent example, how readily and cheerfully does he, not as man, acknowledge the superiority of his eternal father: *The Father*, says he, *is greater than I.* And as man, how far is he from claiming any ascendent over the species! His very disciples he calls his friends, nay, his brethren. He eats, he converses, and lives in common with the poorest of men. And, almost, on every occasion, where he speaks of himself, contents himself with the familiar equalizing title of, *The son of man.* Ah, Christians, Christians! If I may, with any consistency, call you such, how few, how very few of you, can be brought to take even this first short step towards the imitation of your humble Lord! How ready are not you to fly in the face of your parents, your masters, your directors and lawful superiors? How watchful to catch at every little advantage, every opportunity, to Lord it over your equals? Can you then deserve the name of Christians? No, beloved, no; while your practice is such, *Mahometans* have as good a title as you to boast themselves Christians. Either then change your manners, and be humble, as becomes the disciples of Christ, or change your name, and cease to own him as your master. In a word, be consistent in your profession and practice, consistent Christians, or consistent infidels.

The next degree of humility is the seeking subjection to equals, and claiming no preference to inferiors. And in this, dear brethren, how glorious

ous an example has not your heavenly master set you? As GOD, from all eternity, he had no equals, but the eternal Father and the Holy-Ghost, and in compliance with the justice of the one, and the charity of the other, he graciously submitted for your redemption to take flesh, and thus become, in his human nature, subject to both. And tho', as man, the proudest of princes were, in reality, inferior to him, yet, what preference did he claim to any? Born in an humble stable, he chose to reside for thirty years in an humble hovel, and to eat his bread at the sweat of his sacred brow; the remainder of his life he enjoy'd not the common privileges of other men, no, nor the common comforts of common brutes. *Foxes have their holes, birds have their nests, but the humble son of man had not where to repose his head:* His conversation was with the poor and the lowly, He submitted to be fed, to be treated, to be approached, to be insulted, to be tried, and even to be condemn'd to death, by those who were infinitely beneath him. He was never known to despise the meanest of creatures; but he was known to give the preference, even where his life was at stake, to a low, infamous, murderer; and the only instance, in which he ever took the ascendent of any, was on his Cross, where he vouchsafed to be exalted above two thieves, as if he had been the greater criminal. And all this for the sake of practising humility, that he might set you an example of this, his favourite virtue. Ah, beloved, can you then be strictly Christians, can you then be disciples of this heavenly master, while your actions are so opposit to his? Who can prevail upon you to make the least submission to your equals, where they are the least in the wrong; When the example and precepts of Christ cannot induce you to make the least advances towards a right understanding with them, even, where the wrong is on your side, or to give up one little punctilio, any one privilege you dare to arrogate? And how haughtily, how insolently, how cruelly do you not assert every little prerogative you can usurp over your dependants! How proud and pleased, nay, how industrious are you not to seize every little, favourable occasion to trample on your servants, on the poor, and on all beneath you, as if they were not of the same species. Can you then be disciples of Christ? No: Canibals have a fairer title to call themselves his followers than you. Their humility exceeds yours: They proceed upon a fairer footing, and claim no other ascendant over each other, than that which you claim: They claim in a word, no other privilege than that of crushing all they conquer; but then, it is on the more honest condition of being devour'd, if conquer'd. Ah! Christians, if you think there is any advantage in being such, commence Christians in-

deed; and learn of your divine master to be humble. Learn to treat your fellow-creatures, whom circumstance has placed beneath you, with humanity; treat them like your fellow-creatures; treat them with the same tenderness and compassion you would expect if in their station. Otherwise, even deny the name of Christ, and be canibals in earnest; teize not, worry not your inferiors to death by slow degrees, as the enemies of Christ served some of his martyrs, scourging them to death, by the hands of young children; but glut your cruel pride with a hasty meal and devour them at once.

But, why do I talk thus? I am now preaching. I hope, to real Christians, persons better acquainted with their duty than to fall into such cruel arrogance. Yes, beloved, I have too good an opinion of you, not to hope you are better disposed. You surely have already learn'd of Christ to be obedient to your superiors, and tractably submissive even to your equals. You surely know and practice that tender complacency due to the frailty of those whom, if circumstance has placed below you, the precious blood of Christ has made your equals.

But, ah, Christians! What is all this to the humility which your divine Lord has set you an example of. There is another degree, another step to ascend, to be like him, *that is a perfect humility.*

Perfect humility, as the glossary tells us, consists in a voluntary submission, at heart, to inferiors, in which the perfection of justice is placed. beloved, however, be not frighted thro' over delicacy, tremble not for your prerogatives. This does not import, that the parent is to be subject to the child, the master is to give his power to the servant, or the teacher to submit his authority to his pupils. That would be inverting all order. All it requires then is, that you be ready to perform the lowliest offices for the meanest of your fellow-creatures, when their necessities call for your assistance, that you not only forbear to ill-treat or despise them, but even endeavour, from your hearts, to love and cherish them, and think them more precious, more deserving in the eyes of GOD. All this is perfectly consistent with that power and authority over your children, servants, and pupils, which order and decency obliges you to maintain. Christ himself exerted his authority over his disciples, took place of them, sent them on his errands, employed them in fishing for him, and sent them, to prepare his last supper for him. Yet, that same divine Lord thought it no derogation from his authority to prepare them, and four thousand more, a dinner in the desert. And, when he thought it necessary, he even humbled himself to the lowly office of washing their feet. Ah! why, Christians,

why all this, but for the ineffable reason he, himself, gives you? *Know you what I have done*, says Christ. *You call me master and Lord: And you say well, for I am so. If then I, being Lord and master have wash'd your feet; you ought to wash one-another's feet, even when you are masters. For I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you also may do.* So very true is it that the perfection of humility consists in an intire cordial self-depression even to inferiors. And so very plain is it, that you can never be perfect Christians, perfect imitators of Christ, without you practice to the utmost of your power this divine virtue. The next thing then, which remains for me to do is to shew you;

II. How impossible it is for Christians to be saved without it, at least, without a sufficient degree. And this, one would imagin it almost needless to prove. But, lest you should flatter yourselves, with any vain illusions, I shall endeavour to make it farther evident to you, by adding a few observations. St. *John Crisostom* tells us, that as the branches of a tree, which towers to a considerable height, or is placed on a lofty eminence, are hurry'd to and fro by the least breath of air, so are they who suffer their minds to be elated, exposed to every danger. While, on the contrary, they, who have learnt to be truly humble, like a shrub in a valley, remain always safe, always undisturb'd. This exactly agrees with what our divine Lord has told us, that *he who exalts himself shall be humbled*. The sure way then to ruin is pride, the vice opposed to humility. This it was which brought *Haman* to his infamous death. He could not be content with being the second in a vast kingdom, the favourite of his prince, and the next in power to his sovereign, no. He must have more, he must be honour'd and receive homage from all men, or be unhappy. For, what is it which pride, once indulged, will not aspire to. Like an insatiable cormorant, the more it is fed the more greedily it craves. Such was the pride of *Haman*. Not all the cringes of a flattering court, not all the honours paid him, by a numerous enslaved people, could afford him peace, while *Mordecai* refused him a bow. He vows therefore revenge, attempts to effect it, and raises an extraordinary gibbet for his enemy to expire on, when his base purpose should take effect. But God, who makes it his affair to *resist the proud*, confounded his devices, humbled him to the lowest of men, and suffer'd his pride to hurry him into the shameful death he prepared for a better man than himself. *Herod* with all his royal pomp and splendor could not be satisfied: he must arrogate to himself the majesty of God. And, therefore, on a set day, as St. *Luke* tells us, in the twelfth of the

ACTS, *array'd in royal apparel he sat on his throne*, and received divine homage from the people. But, ah what was the consequence of his criminal arrogance. Why, says the holy writer, *immediately the angel of the Lord struck him, because he had given not the glory to God; and being consumed by worms, he gave up*, thus ignominiously, his wretched ghost. Had *Herod*, from the beginning, stifled the first suggestions to pride, he would have humbled himself before his God; he would have publicly acknowledged his littleness, and sought to be thought nothing more than the meanest of his subjects; and his humility would not only have saved him from his miserable end, but crown'd his days with substantial glory. For, he who *resists the proud delights to give grace to the humble*. And, ah, unhappy father, *Adam*! What an infinity of miseries might you not have spared yourself and us, your wretched posterity, had you been satisfied with your innocence, had not the pride of becoming like God, knowing good and evil, seduced you to rebel against your heavenly Lord! What was it expell'd thee from the presence of the Lord, O *Lucifer*, thou, once glorious, angel of light. Ah, how unlike art thou now, to that blessed luminous being thou once wast. Whence, O whence is this horrible change? What the cause of this deplorable alteration. Pride, beloved, detestable pride it was, which transform'd, this, once happy beauteous, spirit to the monster of horror he now is. The next in glory, Majesty, and bliss to God himself, he needs must be equal to him, *I will ascend and become like the most high*. This it was which tempted him to rebel, and the obstinacy, of persisting in this, which hurl'd him, and the rest of the rebel legions, from the heavenly thrones, into the dark abyss of eternal misery, which is now their portion. Yet, think you, his pride began at first, by comparing himself with God. No, his first step was self-esteem, the vain glory he took in his own excellencies: In a word, that self-admiration and applause, which you are apt to be so full of, and which makes you so often despise your fellows, till, at length, you are brought to despise and rebel against God himself. But, ah, Christians, since you see how inconsistent this pride is with eternal happiness, fly it, resist it stifle it in it's infancy, in it's birth. Let it not get the upper hand of the humility which Christ came to teach you; if you mean to fill those blissful seats, which the rebel angels, through pride, have left vacant, and which Christ offers you as the premium of the opposit virtue. If, for want of this divine virtue, those who were in possession of this glorious kingdom, were banish'd out of it forever, what appearance of reason can you have to flatter yourselves that you shall ever attain to it; if you want the same virtue; No, beloved, no.

Your

Your Saviour assures you, that none but such as humble themselves, like little-ones, shall be great in the kingdom of heaven. Humility then is absolutely necessary to every Christian, to attain to the glory he was created for. None can enter there, but by the imitation of their humble Lord, and none can be said to imitate any of his actions, who accompany not their own with a humility like his. So impossible is it to be saved without this divine virtue. And, now I have shewn you, and, I hope, shewn you clearly, the nature and necessity of Christian humility, that you may be equally convinced of the advantages it brings with it, let me proceed to a conclusion, by shewing you;

III. How difficult it is to be damn'd with it. The Royal Psalmist tells us, such is the power of humility, that *the Lord hath always regard to the Prayers of the humble, and hath never despised their supplication.* And, therefore, says Solomon, in the PROVERBS, *It is much better to be humbled with the meek, than to divide the spoil with the proud.* How many instances have we not in holy writ of the efficacy of a true humility of heart to turn away the wrath of God, and to draw down the divine blessings on such as have recourse to it. In the third of *Kings* you will find that *Achab*, perverse *Achab*, as wicked a Prince as he was, obtained of the Almighty a mitigation of his wrath, by humbling himself before him, and submitting to a voluntary penance. In the second of *Chronicles*, chapter twelve, you have a like instance of mercy shewn to *Roboam*, and the princes of *Judah*, in consideration of their humiliation. It was the humility of *Ezechias* which stay'd the Divine Indignation from falling on his people, during his reign. And the same *Nebuchadonozor*, whom pride had humbled, from the throne, to lick the earth with the beasts, no sooner had a sense of his real littleness, than God, in consideration of his inward humiliation, raised him again to his prior grandeur. The wrath of God's offended Majesty was hovering over the heads of the *Ninivites*, when their religious humiliation, like a mighty arm, snatch'd as it were, the sword of vengeance, from the hand of the exterminating angel, and restored them to the grace and favour of their divine Lord.

Ah! illustrious sinner, and more illustrious penitent, what was it raised thee, from the sink of vanity and sin, to that eminent pitch which has render'd thee, since then, such a favourite of the loving Saviour, such a glorious object of admiration and example to all repenting sinners? Ah! It was that humility, that voluntary submission, which made her throw herself at the feet of her Lord, bathe them with her tears of public repentance, wipe them, with the locks of her former vain-glory, and sacrifice to the holy use of anointing them, that

fragrant balsam, which she had so often prostituted to the purposes of vanity. It was that self-depression which induced her to catch the sudden inspiration to repentance, to seize the happy minute of grace to sue for mercy to her offended Saviour, without regarding the taunts, the reproaches, and the scoffs of the standers-by. That, that it was which transform'd her so instantly from a sinner to a saint, from an enemy of Christ to his dearly beloved daughter, and snatch'd her from the jaws of hell, to raise her to that Heaven, in which she now reigns triumphant with her divine Spouse JESUS.

But, what do I hear! methinks the immaculate Virgin of Virgins charms my ear with her heavenly CANTICLE. *My Soul doth magnify our Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in GOD, my Saviour.* Ah! Well may'st thou, O happy, glorious Virgin, rejoice and magnify thy Lord and Saviour, for the infinit favours he has bestow'd on thee. But say, O immaculate Mother of my GOD, what was it so pleasing in thee which made the Lord of Heaven and Earth chuse to be born of thee, and take thy flesh before all other virgins. Was it thy spotless purity of mind and heart. No, he, who created her, beloved, and render'd her immaculate from her conception, could have created another virgin, as spotless as herself, and would have done it rather than been born of her, had she been elated by her virgin purity. Was it her sweet excess of beauty? No; he, who made her the comeliest of all womankind, could, with the same ease, have made another full as graceful as herself. 'Twas not her beauty then, nor chastity, nor her many other excellencies, but her humility which raised her to the dignity of JESU's mother. *It was by her virginity, says a venerable Father of the Church, that she pleased, but it was by her humility she conceived.* This the Holy Virgin herself confirms, *be hath regarded, says she, the humility of his handmaid.* Yes, beloved, yes, *he who hath deposed the mighty and proud from their seat, hath exalted the humble, and raised this most humble of mere mortals to the highest eminence of glorious immortality.* For, the same GOD, who *resists the proud*, delights in *giving grace to the humble.*

And, what wonder is it, beloved, that JESUS should take such delight in seeing the practice of humility, when he purposely descended from Heaven to teach it you in his own person? Was not his whole life, conversation and death one continued example of it? He chose you see to be conceived of an humble virgin, in the ignoble town of *Nazareth*, to be born in an humble stable, and to be supported by humble industry. How humbly he lived, how humbly he conversed, and how humbly he taught, the Gospels are witnesses. In his passion he was humbly tried as an offender, humbly stript of his cloaths,

cloaths, and wounded and bruised in his humble flesh: Humbly submitted to pass for a fool, to be deserted by his disciples, and scourged and crown'd with thorns, in derision, by his enemies: And, at his death, with the utmost excess of humility, would be exposed, naked and disfigured on an ignominious cross, between two thieves. Ah! Why, why did he do all this, but for the reason he gives you for washing his disciples feet. *I have given you an example, that as I have done you also may do.*

Follow then, dear Fellow-Christians, follow the glorious example given you. Be subject to your superiors, be tractable, and, even condescending to your equals, and be not haughty, severe, nor overbearing to such as the vain world considers beneath you. But, if you are desirous of fulfilling all justice with Christ, subject yourselves to the meanest offices, for the meanest of men, where charity calls for your assistance. You see the necessity of doing thus, to be perfect imitators of Christ, and, as such, to

have part in his glory. You see the resistless efficacy which GOD has given, to perfect humility of heart, to stop his anger, and draw down his blessings on all who practise it. Have recourse to it then, and "learn of Christ not, as St. Augustin *says*, to build the structure of a world, not to "create all things visible and invisible, not to work "miracles in the world, or raise the dead to life, "but learn of him to be meek and humble of heart." The good actions you do, lose not the merit of, by publishing them, or accompany them with spiritual pride. But, remember that, do your best, *you are still but useless servants* to him, and will be such, even to yourselves, if you impose not secrecy on yourselves, as he did. Take then the advice of St. PETER, *Be truly humbled under the powerful hand of GOD, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation*, to that eternal glory, to which humility is the ground-step, and which I beg GOD of his infinite mercy to grant you all. *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Twelfth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. LUKE x. 25, 26, 27, 28.

A certain lawyer stood up, tempting Christ, and saying, Master, by doing what thing shall I possess life everlasting? But Jesus said to him: In the law what is written? . . . He answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. And Jesus said to him, Thou hast answered right, this do and thou shalt live.

B*Y doing what thing shall I possess life everlasting?* What an impertinent question for a man to ask, who was versed in the divine law? Foolish wretch! Could he know the law without knowing, that the sum and great end of all was, to love Almighty GOD above all things, and mankind, as himself, for the Almighty's sake? No: For our blessed Saviour shew'd him how much more he knew the way to life everlasting, than he had the will to pursue it, by forcing the means from his own mouth. But, why then did he enquire after what he was not resolved to embrace? Why? The Evangelist tells you the reason. His purpose was base. He came not with a desire of being inform'd by Christ, but with

a view of tempting him. He was in hopes that Jesus would have overlook'd these essential, fundamental duties, to prescribe him others of a less important nature, that he might have it in his choice, either to decry the Divine Teacher's authority, or under sanction of that authority to neglect the great and chief duties of life, for those of inferior obligations, and not so coercive to the passions. Ah, Christians! How often is your intention such, or very little better, in coming to us? When you come to us, the ministers of Christ, to enquire after the means of salvation; if you do not directly seek an opportunity to weaken that authority we have received from Christ, by exposing the want of learning, or want of prudence, which you think you discover in us, do you not, at least, lay hold on every imaginary opportunity, of this sort, you can meet with to lessen us in the esteem of the faithful, and thereby weaken all our efforts for their salvation? Or, if some of you are a little more humane than to carry your malice to such destructive lengths, how often do you have recourse to us, at best, to have your passions sooth'd, and your consciences lull'd asleep. You know that the whole law depends upon your loving the Lord your GOD with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and

and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourselves. But this you can't find in your souls to comply with; your passions persuade you, that the task is laborious, and the confinement it lays you under is too irksome for your unruly appetites to brook. To be dispensed from loving GOD better than your ill-gotten, or ill-managed wealth. Some of you would gladly hurry over a considerable number of prayers to him; and others, to be discharged from preferring him to the idols of their lust, or vanity, would cheerfully submit to a supererogatory portion of abstinence. For, to some of you, kneeling costs little or nothing, and temperance is no self-denial to others of you, but agrees with your constitution and humour. Others, again, to be at liberty to defraud, to insult, or to glut your vengeance on your fellow-creatures, would readily give away one half of your substance, in alms, to the poor. You have more than your luxury and wantonness knows what to do with; and, with your superfluity, you could gratify your vain-glory and ostentation. In short, Christians, any penance would seem light to some of you, which might but exempt you from loving your eternal benefactor above all things, and his image for his blessed sake. And yet, you are not willing to be damn'd, you wish to be saved, and are desirous of both serving mammon, and enjoying GOD. And, therefore, you come to us to inquire, *by doing what you may possess life everlasting?* And, this you do, in hopes that we shall rid you of the unwieldy burden your corrupt imaginations groan under; that we shall dispense you from these essential obligations for trifles, duties which are no otherwise such, than as they tend to the fulfilling these more fundamental ones. O, my gracious GOD! Is it possible mankind can be such enemies to truth as to seek thus to be sooth'd into error? Can they be so fond of a spiritual lethargy as thus eagerly to pursue it, they who are so frightened at every little drowsiness more than ordinary. Ah self-deluding Christians! Be not thus fond of dreaming: Come not to us for the means of life everlasting, with the hopes of being flatter'd, you know that the first step is to love GOD above all things and the second to love your neighbour as yourselves. *Do this and you shall live.* Let us then prescribe you ever so many fasts, ever so long prayers, ever so abundant alms-deeds, they can all profit you nothing, unless the sum, the soul, the end of all be a pure love of GOD, and a sincere charity for your neighbour. For without these you shall die; there is no life, no glory, no heaven for you. All this you know; yet who, to judge by your actions, could guess that you do know? At least it is plain, that what you know, you seldom reflect on: Else why are you so deficient in the practice. Let me then at present refresh

your memories, a little concerning one of these great duties. The gospel will very soon furnish me with a fair opportunity again, of expatiating on the love you owe to your neighbour; and therefore I shall now entertain you wholly on the more elevated subject of the love you owe to your gracious GOD. Concerning which I have *two* things only to observe to you in this discourse.

I. That it is sovereignly necessary to life everlasting: *And*

II. That it is extremely reasonable, and efficaciously fruitful to that blessed end.

“Come then, O Lord, thou lover of our souls, and fill us with thy grace and wisdom, that totally consumed on earth with loving thee, we may receive the glorious premium of our love, in heaven, and find ourselves renew'd again in thee our only life.”

I. The love of GOD, is a pure sincere and ardent affection for the divine author of all things, above all that is created. It admits of no joint attachment to any thing beneath GOD, and cannot subsist with any rival affection to aught which is not GOD. The Lord of majesty is a great and jealous Lord, as he is infinitely superior to all his creatures, and has no equal out of himself, therefore he cannot brook any foreign competitor in the love he requires from his creatures. He had no assistant in the production of any of them, and therefore will bear no rival in their love of him, nor accept of any affection from them, which is not perfectly pure and unmixed with the love of aught besides, except it be for his sake alone, and with an intire dependance upon him. In short the hearts, which he is the whole and sole author of, he expects should be wholly taken up with respect for him. Nor indeed is the heart of man capable of retaining any degree of that sovereign regard, which is due to the divine majesty, without banishing every propensity or affection which is not perfectly dependent upon him. *No man can serve two masters,* says the Eternal wisdom. *For either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will endure the one and condemn the other.* It is impossible then to have a sovereign love for GOD, and at the same time a sovereign love for *Mammon*, that is, for whatever is out of GOD. If you love aught which is created with a sovereign affection, independent on that you pay to GOD, GOD is no longer the sovereign of your hearts, you worship foreign Gods: You love, you endure them; and you hate and despise him. For what greater hatred or contempt can you shew to the Lord of heaven and earth, than to place him upon a level with, nay below, the works of his hands; as you

you attempt to do, as often as you divide your affections between him and his creatures? To love God with that sovereign affection which is his due, you are to love him as the source and ultimate end of all things; and consequently to love nothing besides him, but for his only sake, and so far only as is consistent with his glory and good pleasure.

This, Beloved, this is the love God requires of you: This is his due; and *this*, your Saviour tells you, *is the greatest and the first commandment*. Wherefore then *do this and thou shalt live*, O mortal, and live forever. For once you arrive to this perfection of love of God; once you make your divine Lord the chief object of all your wishes; the love of his creatures for his sake, and in obedience to him will follow in course: And then that love will be pure, will be perfect and truly Christian. But without the perfection of divine love, what source can any regard you pay to created Beings flow from, but the corrupted sink of self-pointed views? For O my all lovely God! How is it possible to love any thing out of thee, with an untainted affection which is not loved purely for thy blessed sake, and for the amiable qualities which the conformity with thy divine will bestows upon it? Ah how justly did thy favorite *Augustin* say, "He loves thee too little, Lord who loves any thing with thee, which he loves not for thee." Too little indeed, Christians, nay not at all, can they be said to love God, whose affection to any thing created is not wholly influenced by their love of him. "An equal regard for the world and for God, cannot possibly subsist together in one heart," says *St. Cyprian*, any more than one eye can at once behold the earth and the heavens."

It is this perfection of divine love, this perfect charity, then, which is the precious, candid, spotless, nuptial garment, the soul must put on to be espoused with Christ, and admitted to the banquet of his glory. It was for want of this, that the unhappy wretch in the twenty second of *St. Matthew*, was not only expell'd from the royal feast to which he had been call'd with the rest; but even cast into utter darkness, to bewail forever with weeping and gnashing of teeth, the folly and perversity of not being provided with it. But O eternal verity, how sadly affecting is the fatal truth which thou hast drawn from this unthinking creature's fate, that *many are call'd; and few are chosen*. Yes, Christians, you are all call'd; but ah how few of you, caution'd by this man's folly, study to avoid his miserable fate! How few of you endeavour to secure your election to glory, by providing yourselves with the nuptial garment of grace. Like the foolish virgins you covet life everlasting, but neglect the means; like them you hear the call, you accept the invita-

tion to the heavenly jubilee, but slothfully forget to provide for being chosen as well as call'd; in a word, like them you set out in pursuit of the bliss you are call'd to, but ah, too much like them, you provide not your lamps, you replenish not your souls with the oil of divine love. What then can you expect but that at the decline of life, when you perceive your want, and try too late to remedy your past neglect, the gates of glory should be barr'd against you, and you repulsed with that heart-rending sentence, *Amen, I say to you I know you not*. Forbid it, gracious God! Forbid it. Permit not any here to be forever banish'd from thy all-enlivening sight, for want of the nuptial garment of thy grace; for want of the oil of thy love. No, cloath us all betimes with thee, make us of the happy few who shall be chosen as well as call'd; and sweetly give us to fill our lamps betimes, with such an ardent lasting love for thee, as may prepare and keep us all in readiness, to enter with the prudent virgins in thy train, to thy eternal nuptials. But ah Christians, if such be your desire, if your hearts join with me in this petition, watch as your Saviour tells you like those prudent virgins; *Watch ye therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour*. Sure you are of being call'd one day, but when the time of your election will come on, is what you cannot even guess. Stand always then upon your guard; be ever in readiness, and suffer not your ardency of love for God to slacken for one single instant, but let your constant study be to fuel and encrease it. Say often with that glorious example of divine love *St. Augustin*, "O eternal verity, O unfeigned charity, O precious eternity! Thou art my God, and to thee are all my wishes, all my sighs directed day and night."

On this, on this alone Beloved, all your dependence must be built. This alone can entitle you to the life everlasting you aspire to. "Nothing is more precious to God," says *the saint*, than the "virtue of divine charity; nothing more desirable to Satan than the extinction of that charity." The reason of both we are told by *St. Basil*. "The love of God," says *this eminent Father*, is an inexhaustible treasure, which renders all who possess it immensely rich, and without which the most wealthy of mortals are miserably poor." In short, with a sincere love of God above all things created, it is impossible to perish, and without it is impossible to be saved. "If I speak with the tongues of men and angels," says *St. Paul*; "... If I should have prophecy, and knew all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains; "... If I should distribute all my goods to be meat for the poor, nay if I should deliver up my body,

"so that I burn, and have not charity, I am nothing, it doth profit me nothing." * Not eloquence, wisdom, and knowledge then, you see; not the strongest faith, the warmest zeal, no nor the greatest good-works in themselves are capable of raising you to everlasting life, without being animated with a perfect love of God. No not beggary itself courted for Christ's poor, nor even the most cruel martyrdom sustain'd for the faith of Christ, can save you from perdition, if it be not influenced by a perfect love for Christ, above all created beings. "Observe then, says St. Jerom, how important a good is this sublime charity, should we suffer martyrdom for the sake of having our relicks held in veneration; should we merely to popular applause, sacrifice our blood with utmost intrepidity; or give our substance even to the reducing ourselves to beggary; the action would be less worthy reward than punishment from God, and we have more right to the tortures which perfidy earns, than to the crown which victory merits." It is even so, Christians, the greatest and best actions you can perform, have no title to a crown of glory, if the sovereign affection you bear to God, be not the source of them. On the contrary, your perfidy in doing them for any other end, than to give glory to his divine Majesty, stamps them with the guilt of reprobation. It is the supreme love of God, then which must render all you do deserving of life everlasting, and without that, vain, fruitless and destructive is all you can do. So sovereignly necessary to life everlasting is this divine virtue, this greatest first commandment on which all others depend.

II. Ah Christians, and how reasonable is it not, that you should render this tribute of gratitude to your gracious God! Is he not infinitely deserving all the affection you can pay him? Eye but the glory of his Majesty with the eyes of your faith, consider but the immensity of his power, and the extensiveness of his goodness, with which he created all things, governs all things, and sweetly disposes all things with wisdom, and by his only word; and how lovely must he not appear in your eyes! Why is it you are charm'd into love for any of his creatures, but for the little excellencies you discover in them; but ah how much more infinitely refined are the excellencies you admire, how much more eminently perfect in God, from whom the imaginary perfections of all his creatures flow. Shall we then pall and disappoint our affections in those little shallow rivulets, when we may satiate our desires in a boundless ocean of all that is desirable, by fixing our affections on God himself? No, my sovereign good, never let it be said. Be thou all our desire henceforth. O that we could but love thee as

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thou deservest. But since our nature is incapable of infinit love, at least we will love thee henceforward above all other things, and to the utmost of our finite capacities.

And how, Christians, how can you chuse to do so, if ever you reflect on the infinit favours he has bestow'd upon you? He created you out of nothing to his own divine likeness, gave you a body capable of all the functions of life, bestow'd upon you an immortal soul, capable of reason, and enrich'd with many privileges, denied to other creatures. And why all this but that, after a short pilgrimage on earth, you might be transfer'd to partake of his eternal felicity with him? Can you then love your parents for the gift of life, which they were only instruments under God of procuring you; can you be grateful to them for the little substance they have raked together, as much for love of themselves as for you; and yet forget the love, the gratitude you owe to your eternal benefactor for all you possess, and for all he has prepared for you without any interest to himself? Even when you had forfeited all the fruits of his immense goodness to you, what did he not condescend to do to reinstate you in them? *So has God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.* Yes, my God and Saviour, so did'st thou love this soul of mine, these souls of all here present, as to pour forth thy precious blood to preserve us from eternal ruin. Ah Christians, what then shall we return to the Lord for all things, which he has done to and for us? Let us give him our hearts at least. Give me your souls then to offer up with mine. Yes, take, O God, these souls of ours: for they are all your own. Accept these hearts, this life, this love of ours. That from this minute we may live alone to thee, that we may die at length with warmth of loving thee, who for the love of us did'st die upon a cross.

But was this all, Beloved, which your God and Saviour did, to purchase love from you. Where is the instance of a mother so fond, so tender of her children, as to feed them with her flesh, to give her blood to quench their thirst. There have been parents too who have laid their life with pleasure down to save their offspring. Nay there have been who have done as much for friends. But here the perfection of all human charity must end. For no man, says Christ, *has greater charity than he who lays down his life for his friends.* Yes this All-gracious exceeded in some measure, even these boundaries of love, leaving his precious body and blood, a lasting feast for you, in that adorable sacrament which he foresaw you would nevertheless, so often slight if not prophane, and all to afford you fresh recruits of strength and grace, and lights and means to reach more easily the bliss he invites you to. O my Jesus, my Saviour and my God, how wretch-

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edly ungrateful must we be, if after all this vast profusion of thy love, we can forbear, to love thee above all things, and love thee to our utmost!

Who call'd you, Christians, you, O Catholics, to that holy Church and faith out of which none can be saved, but by invincible ignorance, but God. For *who can come to Christ, unless the Father draw him?* How many millions are denied that blessing, which you unhappily, unthinkingly set so light by! To whom do you owe the peaceful present exercise of your religion, the easy access to the holy sacraments, the comfort of having near at hand the ministers of God, to assist and succour you in sickness, danger, and distress; who has sent me this day to you, to court the love of God, but that all-gracious God himself, who asks of you nothing more than your heart. How many poor, holy favorite Catholics of God, this very day, groaning under the most cruel persecution from heretics, mahometans and infidels, in *Ireland*, in *Turkey* and elsewhere, remote from Church, remote from spiritual assistance, are now sighing after public prayers, after the holy sacraments, and after the solace of a religious exhortation, all which are granted you without a pain, perhaps without scarce a wish. Ah Christians! Can you then slight these blessings because familiar? Can you forget the bounteous hand they flow from? Can you withhold your love from fixing wholly on him, whose love is so immensely fruitful to you? No, let him engross your hearts and souls. Say with *St. Augustin* and me, "O my soul, if it be irksome to thee, to be the first to love, let it not be irksome to thee to love again, be not slothful to return love to thy God and Saviour, who prevents thee with so much affection. No, my Lord, my love, if thy delight is to be with the sons of men, our delight shall from this moment be forever placed in being with thee."

Let this, Beloved, be your study. You'll find your account in it. However great be the number or guilt of your former sins, make but one act of fervent, sincere and fruitful love of God, and all your sins shall be remitted. For *Charity*, that is, the love of God, which is the perfection of this divine virtue, *bides a multitude of sins*, as *St. Paul* assures us. O glorious *Magdalen*! what was the *Hyssop* which so suddenly effaced thy sins, and made thee so acceptable a penitent to Christ? Ah Christians! It was this love of God. *Many sins are forgiven her*, says *CHRIST*, *because she greatly loved*. O give us, dear Saviour of our souls, this purifying love. *Sprinkle us with this hyssop, and we*

shall be cleansed, wash us with it, and we shall be made whiter than snow. It was this holy charity, which made *Abraham* renounce all the ties of blood and nature, to sacrifice his dear and only child to the divine pleasure. By doing which, he not only obtain'd the life of that child back again from God, but even the perpetuation of his posterity. It was this which made the three children prefer the honour of the Almighty, to the empty promises of men, and boldly to chuse rather the most cruel death than commit a voluntary breach of his sacred laws. In recompence of which they were not only honour'd with the Almighty's singular grace and favour, but miraculously preserved by his omnipotence, from the attempts of their enemies, and the rage of a flaming furnace. And it is this, which if you have recourse to it, Christians, will not only preserve and protect you from all the miseries of a present and a future state, but even secure you the everlasting life you wish to possess. "The love of God," says *Cassiodor*, "is to virtue a kind of enlivening shower, which makes it shoot forth a kind of blissful satisfaction, till it ripens into the holiest fruits." Do you ask me then, Christians, *by doing what you shall possess life everlasting*. Let me then in my turn ask you with Christ: *What is written in the law?* What is the great end of the law? Is it not that you love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, do this, and you will soon attain to the second commandment of *loving your neighbour as yourself*. Upon both which the whole law depends. Do this then and you shall live. Have a perfect love for God, and every affection depending upon that, will be easy to you. For that is the miraculous love of which the prophet tells you, that love is as strong as death. O sacred, blissful, heavenly virtue! What more can I say to thy immortal praise, than that thou had'st the power to draw from heaven to earth, the Lord of both, and to exalt mankind to heaven. O stupendous charms of charity. By this the God of majesty vouchsafed to stoop himself to hell, that you, O reptil mortals, might ascend with him to the highest seats of heavenly glory. Fix then your hearts, your souls, and all your wisties in him, treasure to yourselves, a treasure of love in God, that where your riches are, there also your hearts may be. In a word, love God, and live a life of increasing grace on earth, till you are lifted to an eternal life of glory among the blessed. Which I beseech, &c. *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Thirteenth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

GAL. iii. 19, 22.

Why was the law then? It was put for transgressions... that the promise by the faith of JESUS CHRIST might be given to them that believe.

FAITH then alone will not suffice to save you, Beloved. How absurd is it therefore, in the abettors of that destructive doctrine, to pretend to quote St. Paul for their authority! The apostle indeed in this very epistle, labours to destroy the opposite absurdity, to wit the sufficiency of good-works alone to salvation, independent on faith. For this is the other extreme of error. But does the removal of one extravagance establish any thing in favour of another? No, surely: It is very true, as the sacred writer observes, that good-works, or the accomplishment of the law alone, are not sufficient to entitle any man to that divine inheritance, which was promised only through the merits of CHRIST. For, *if there had been a law given that could justify, undoubtedly justice should be of the law, and then there could have been no occasion for justification by faith in Christ.* A falsity which all Christians are so convinced of, that there needs no argument to explode it at present. But what does all this prove in favour of the sufficiency of faith alone, or against the necessity of animating our faith by good-works? If faith according to St. Paul, is necessary to salvation, are good-works according to him, therefore unnecessary? If the inheritance of God's glory was promised to our faith? Did not the same divine Lord who gave us the promise, give us the law? "Is the law then, *says our apostle*, against the promises of God, God forbid, *says he*. Why was the law then? It was put for transgressions... that the promise by the faith of JESUS CHRIST might be given to them that believe."

You see then, Beloved, that to obtain a part in the inheritance of Christ, faith is absolutely necessary, and so are good-works. To be saved by Christ, you must believe in Christ, and how can you be said to believe in whom you do not obey. "Therefore, *says St. Paul*, the law was our pedagogue in Christ, that we may be justified by faith. For not the hearers of the law, are just with God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." From all which it is self-evident, that

Christians cannot believe in Christ to any purpose, without good-works, in a word, without faithfully keeping the commandments. Else why did God give them to his people, and Christ confirm them to his followers? *Do not think*, says your divine Master, *that I am come to break the law... I am not come to break but to fulfill.* No, dear Lord, thou camest not like the impostors in our days, to throw all order into anarchy and wild confusion, to encourage vice, and render virtue irksome. Thy blessed practice spoke thy heavenly purpose of enforcing thy eternal Father's will by precept and example. How plainly has't thou told us that, "He that shall break one of the least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be call'd the least in the kingdom of heaven. But he that shall do and teach, shall be call'd great in the kingdom of Heaven."

Ah Christians, dearest Fellow-Christians! Have you a mind to be great in the kingdom of heaven? Take the means your heavenly Master prescribes to you, if you really believe in him. And that by teaching you to be great there, I become equally so myself, I shall hereafter, when the gospel or epistle of the day affords me the opportunity, consider each of the ten commandments separately. But as a proper preparative to so copious a subject, I will at present confine myself to the consideration of the commandments in general, concerning which there are three material truths worthy to be clear'd up.

- I. The nature of the several commandments, and the persons they bind.
- II. The reasons which oblige men to obey them :
And
- III. The means to attain to a perfect observance of them.

"O give us understanding then, dear Lord, that we may know thy saving laws, and give us efficacious grace to practice what thou givest us to know, that we may happily become as truly great, as thou would'st mercifully have us be in heaven!"

- I. The commandments of God are the standard laws, which he has been pleased to lay down, as an

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inviolable rule to mankind for their conduct of life. And these laws the Almighty communicated to us in three several manners, by the inward light of nature, by writing, and by the living voice of his blessed Son. To infuse the sense of them into us, by the light of nature, he endow'd our souls with reason, capable of discovering between the good they enjoin, and the evil they forbid; and thus were they deliver'd to our fore-fathers from *Adam* down, to the entrance of the *Israelites* into the wilderness; when he deliver'd them written on tables to *Moses*, on the holy mount, to publish them to his people. After which our divine redeemer at his coming, ratified and confirm'd them, by his living voice, in the most forcible terms; protesting previously that he came *not to break the law but to fulfill it*, and then adding, *that he that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be call'd the least in the kingdom of heaven. But he that shall do and teach, shall be call'd great in the kingdom of heaven.* And indeed, O my gracious Saviour, what title can we have to any part in thy blessed kingdom, if we neglect these commandments, in spite of that grace which thou hast purchased for us, to enable us to fulfill them, and purchased us at the big price of thy precious blood!

I need not tell you, Christians, that these sacred laws we are speaking of, which for the reason I have just given you, are sometimes call'd the law of nature, or the unwritten law, sometimes the written law, and often the law of grace, are ten in number. You all know them too well, not to be inexcusable in the many violations you fall into against them all. But ah what will your knowing them avail, but swell your condemnation, while you neglect to obey them! To live peaceably and happily in any community, tis absolutely necessary to preserve a perfect good understanding with the head of it in the first place; and next with every member subject to that head. As God then is the sovereign Lord of all creatures, and has mercifully vouchsafed to admit you and the rest of mankind, into a kind of community with himself, without any merit on your side, or the least degree of proportion with him; can it be much for him to require of you a perfect subjection to him, and a perfect harmony with the rest of your fellow-subjects? No, surely you cannot be worthy of the ineffable promises he has graciously condescended to make you through Christ, without wholly and heartily corresponding with this his divine purpose, by ready compliance with these few commandments. For *why was the law*, says St. PAUL, *but that the promise, by the faith of JESUS CHRIST might be given to them that believe?* In vain then are you Christians, in vain do you believe in Christ, fruitless is all your faith; if you do not animate that faith with good-works, by steady-

ly observing those few commandments, which his Eternal Father gave you, and he has confirm'd to you. For, O my Lord, thou has't sufficiently warn'd us, that the promise made us by the faith of thee, will not be given to us for barely believing in thee. "Not all who *barely own thee* and cry to thee Lord, Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but such only as *believing in thee*, do the will of thy Father who is in heaven."

God if he had so pleased, could with equal justice have given you instead of ten commandments ten thousand, and all wholly concerning himself; and you, you would have been equally bound to fulfill them. Whereas his disinterested bounty contented itself with laying you under the easy restriction of ten commandments, divided into two separate tables, the first and smaller number of which relate to your duty to his sovereign Majesty, the second and more copious to your obligations to mankind. And what renders the disinterested generosity of God the more conspicuous to every eye is, that you yourselves are full as much interested in the accomplishment of these sacred laws, as any of your fellow-creatures, and not only in the accomplishment of those which regard mankind, but much more those which relate to God himself, who has no other interest in your fulfilling any of them, than the gracious pleasure he is mercifully pleas'd to take, in seeing you lay hold on the means he gives you to attain to his ineffable promises. O my God what advantage can'st thou reap from any of our little services, thou who art infinitely and unalterably blessed from all eternity, and to whom let us do all we can, we are still but useless servants.

And yet, Christians, useless servants as you are to him, you are still his servants, his creatures, and all you have and are is the free, liberal and unmerited gift of his hands; and therefore if he had laid no commands upon you, with regard to himself, you would still owe him *fidelity, reverence, gratitude and love*. And how can you shew your *fidelity* to him, but by refusing to pay to any inferior being, the supreme honour due to him alone? How can you express your *reverence* to him, but by speaking to and of him, and his sacred mysteries with utmost respect and decency, never uttering yourself, nor where it is in your power to hinder, suffering to be utter'd any thing injurious to the glory of his name? Or finally what less proof can you give him of your gratitude and affection, for the infinit favours he bestows upon you, than to set apart one day out of seven, to honour, praise and thank him in public. Now this is all he requires of you, for himself, that you *have no strange Gods before him*, that you *take not his name in vain*, that you *keep holy to him the sabbath-day*, as a proof of your sovereign love of him above all things.

things, from whom alone you receive all things. And to what other end does he require this of you, but that you, by doing what you are bound to do by nature, may enjoy what he has mercifully promised you through grace? How long then, O God, how long will mankind be such enemies to themselves, as to neglect those salutary laws, which thy disinterested bounty gave them for their own advantage?

Are not all the laws which God has given you concerning himself intirely so, Christians? Is it not to you that all the benefit of fulfilling them will accrue? And are not the duties enjoined you, to practice to your fellow-creatures equally suited by your gracious Law-giver to your own interest? Who but you will reap the benefit of them? For whose good but yours were they made? Was there not a general justice and charity required by God in mankind towards each-other, what safety could there be for any individual of the species, and especially for you yourselves? The strongest, the most crafty, and the most covetous would be daily plundering, trampling upon, and devouring the weaker, the more simple, and the less greedy; as beasts deal with one another. It is therefore for the security of every individual of you, that all should be strictly restrain'd from injuring the person, property, peace or reputation of any, in fact, in word, or in wish. And this is all which God requires of you, in the second table of his commandments, relating to your neighbour. And this if God had not mercifully enforced by his express commands, nature itself, and the principle of self-preservation, would sufficiently demonstrate the necessity of. Where then is the mighty grievance in these laws, which can or ought to render them so irksome to you, Christians? O thou all-wise eternal law-giver! Is it so much that we comply with laws, on which our own immediate safety every hour depends.

And yet, Beloved, this is the summary of all the ten Commandments which God has given you. And these you are indispensably bound to comply with, not so much for that they were written on the holy mount, as because they are the very laws of nature, of God, and of Christ who confirm'd them, and because they are put for transgressions, but as a bar to you, to teach you what transgressions you ought to avoid, that the promise by the faith of JESUS CHRIST, as my text says, might be given to them that believe, that is, I hope, to you.

All mankind are alike, and equally bound to observe them. For they are given to all without exception, by the sovereign Lord and God of all. None are excepted from the general benefit they are design'd to yield to all. None then can exempt themselves or be exempted from a dutifull and total compliance with them.

II. The principal reasons however, which ought to urge you all, Christians, to a faithful inviolable compliance with these sacred laws, are those which your gracious law-giver himself vouchsafes to give you. *I am, says he, the Lord your God.* It is God himself then who lays his divine commands upon you; that sovereign Majesty which created you, governs you, protects and provides for you: That Almighty Lord, without whose continued preservation you must sink into your original nothing, from whom all the blessings you can wish or stand in need of must derive, and who is capable of inflicting on you all the evils you have reason to dread. How dare you then, O reptil mortals, break through the inviolable laws of the Lord of Majesty, whom it is so much your interest to obey, so much to your peril to offend. O heavenly Lord! Is it not enough for us to know that thou art our God, the God of terrors, and the God of glory, to make us tremble at every the least breach of thy sacred Injunctions?

But I am even says, God, that gracious benefactor who brought you out of the house of bondage. Yes, Christians; the commandments are given you by the same all-gracious hand, which rescued you from the servitude of sin and Satan, by baptism, by the holy sacraments, and other since repeated graces, by him who, to snatch you from the bondage of hell, gave himself up a captive to the rage of his enemies, and suffer'd a cruel and ignominious death. And all he desires of you in return is, that you love him with all the gratitude you are capable of, and express your gratitude to him by a ready, chearful, steady observance of the few precepts he has given you for your good alone. And O divine benefactor! Is it much that we should love ourselves truly by loving ourselves in and through thee? Are thy favours so fruitless to us, that we cannot find in our hearts to be friends to ourselves in the gratitude thou requirest us to pay to thee?

If the sovereign gratitude then which you owe to your Almighty benefactor, has no charms to attract you, Beloved, to the exact observance of his sacred laws, at least let your own interest prevail with you. Know then, Christians, that the whole great affair of your eternal salvation, absolutely depends upon it. *If you will enter into life, keep the commandments,* says your blessed redeemer. It is not enough for you to believe in the commandments, and the Divine Author of them, nor to make an open acknowledgment of that belief in bare words. You may call out upon God to the end of life, Lord, Lord; but if your obedience to him, keeps not pace with your faith in him, your acknowledging the Lord to be your God will only increase your guilt. *If I am your Lord, where is my honour,* God will say? *If I am your master, where is*

is my fear? No, No: *Not all who say to me Lord, Lord, says Christ, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* Here then, my friends, is a plain demonstration how much your interest is concern'd in keeping the commandments of God. You cannot enter into Heaven, without doing the will of the eternal Father; you cannot do his will without fulfilling his commandments, then, without fulfilling them, you cannot enter into Heaven, you cannot be saved. Wherefore, beloved, if you think it your interest to attain to a blessed futurity, you must think it your interest to obey God's precepts. For no one can ever hope to reach to any end, who is resolved to neglect the means. And, that these are essential means, appears from what I have just said, as well as from the words of St. Paul, in my text, *That these laws were given, by God, on purpose, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them who believe.*

III. But then you will tell me, that to lay hold of these means you stand in need of others. 'Tis very true you do so: However those other means are within our reach, and, therefore, you are absolutely inexcusable if you do not make use of them.

The first means then you ought to practise, to attain to a perfect observance of the commandments of God, is a firm resolution, after the example of Holy David, *I have vow'd, says he, and resolved to keep the judgments of thy justice.* You, Christians, as well as David, have vow'd, in your very baptism, to do this. But, ah! how few of you have gone beyond a bare, faint resolution; which, if it was not broken as soon as made, was it for want of will, or of reason to enable you to break through them? Your passions, your humour and your appetites were not immediately thwarted by them; or, the greater awe you stood in to the laws of men than to those of God, restrain'd you from violating, in fact, the precepts which your hearts, perhaps, inwardly broke. For, O how very few among you, who stand here, can comfort yourselves with the thought of never having disobey'd one of the Ten Commandments, either in fact or wish; and, that, for the pure fear of God more than of man! Alas, all the comfort then which now remains for you, is, that you have it in your power to make him amends for the future, by renewing your resolution of *Fidelity*, and keeping it till death. But then, even That to be pleasing to him, must be extended to all. You must make no one reserve to yourselves of any idol vice. No, your resolution must extend to all God's precepts. For, *he who sins against one part of the law, says our apostle, is made guilty of all.*

Now, to put this resolution in practice, you must have a frequent recourse to Almighty God for the assistance of his Grace. Say then, O Christians, and say often, to your heavenly law-giver, with St. *Augustin*, "Give, O Lord, what thou commandest, and command what thou pleasest." Yes, grant us, O God, the giver of all help, thy saving grace to fulfill thy divine laws, and then give us such laws as shall best please thy divine Majesty. The great obstacle to your performing God's will is temptation, and the great remedy your Saviour prescribes you against this obstacle is, *Pray, that you enter not into temptation.* Prayer then must necessarily be a powerful means to enable you to perform, with steadiness and fidelity, the will of God, in the observance of his commandments.

The next means is, to make the will and law of God your earnest study; for, alas, how is it possible you should ever attain to the perfect practice of what you neither know nor labour to know? It was this sacred study which employ'd the life of the royal prophet. *Thy law, O Lord, says he, is my meditation day and night.* It was the frequent application to this study which enabled him to reap fresh delight from it every time he applied himself. *I have placed my delight, says he, in the words of thy mouth;* and it was that delight raised him to such a degree of perfection, as finish'd him a man according to God's own heart. Ah, Christians, Christians! You too, you all might become creatures, according to God's own heart, would you but place your chief delight in studying the commandments of God, in order to find out his blessed will, and put it in practice.

But then, to do this effectually, you must have recourse to self-denial and mortification. *They who are of Christ, says St. Paul, have crucified their flesh with their vices and concupiscences.* St. Paul, by experience, knew that there is a law in the flesh repugnant to the law of the mind, and, therefore, was well assured, that none can be faithful disciples of Christ, or sincere observers of his commandments, who do not, from their hearts, declare war to the law of the flesh, by self-denial and mortification. This he himself did, and this you must do to render your study of the divine laws fruitful to you. If you subdue your flesh and your appetites; they will not be able to disturb you in the observance of your fidelity to God. But, O, my God! How is it possible to serve thee and serve the flesh, which is so repugnant to thy laws?

There is yet another means which will render all the rest easy to you, that is, to reflect on, to convince and possess yourselves of this infallible truth, that the observance of these laws is neither grievous nor difficult as your corrupt nature would vainly persuade

suade you. If you bestow any favours upon any of your fellow-creatures, you think it no grievance to expect that they love, and be grateful and respectful to you for them, especially, if the little return they make you, you-yourself afford them the means of making, and more especially, if you court their gratitude, by the encouraging promises of fresh and greater favours. Where then is the mighty grievance in your being required to love, thank, and be gratefully respectful to your eternal Benefactor, who expects no returns, from you, but what he himself generously gives you the grace and means to make, and encourages you to by eternal and ineffable promises? You-yourself are jealous enough of the safety of your persons, property, peace and reputation: And think it no grievance on others to be restrained from disturbing you in the possession of them. Where then is the hardship in your being required to do by others, as you wish they should do by you? And, what difficulty can attend the practice of these duties, while you may have the assistance of God's grace to enable you to fulfill them, if you will but vouchsafe to make use of it?

It will be a poor excuse, in the day of judgment, Christians, for any of your transgressions of these sacred commandments, to say, with some protestants, that they were impossible to be kept. The evidence of God's eternal Son will, undoubtedly, be preferred to any you can bring, and he will then remind you of what he has already told you, that his yoke is sweet, and his burden light. The Apostles, who will then be the jury, to give their verdict, for or against you, will reproach you with having taught you the same. Remember, O prevaricators, St. John will say, what I have once told you. *This is the will of God, that you keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.* And, what, O disobedient Christians, what reply will you be able to make?

See you not then, how much your eternal salvation depends upon a perfect observance of these sacred laws? The glory of God is absolutely concerned in seeing that either you fulfill them, or suffer eternally for not doing so. Your whole Christianity essentially depends, in part, upon your steady adherence to them. For, why is the law, as my text says? Is it not put for guarding you from transgressions against the duties of that, *that the promise by the faith of JESUS CHRIST may be*

given to them who believe? Will not the same sovereign Lord then, who has promised everlasting, ineffable rewards, to all faithful disciples of Christ, who shall keep these commandments, will not he, I say, eternally and rigorously punish all faithless Christians, who shall dare to violate them? You, then, O beloved, are bound to comply with them, not only by all the sacred ties of justice, equity and gratitude to God, but even by self-interest. For, not only the glory of your Almighty Benefactor, but even your own self-preservation, temporal and eternal, is at stake. Begin then, Christians, begin this important work. The task is extremely easy, and the means to effect it are in your own reach. Renew the resolutions of fidelity; implore the grace of God to put them in constant practice; mortify the laws of your flesh, that you may make the laws of God your constant study; and, the more you study them the less difficulty you will find in them; nay, the delight they will afford you, will perfect and finish you, creatures according to God's own heart. God will honour you with his love, when you express your love to him, by a faithful adherence to his blessed will in these commandments. For, to this end alone did he give them to you, that you might have an opportunity of shewing him your love, by fulfilling them for his sake. And, what is there so unreasonable in this, that you cannot comply with it. "O, my God, says St. Augustine, what is man, that thou should'st desire to be beloved by him, and menace him into loving thee, by threatening him with severe, eternal punishments, if he does not? Is it not, O inexhaustible goodness, a sufficient punishment of it self, nay, the worst of punishments to be without the happiness and delight of loving thee?" Ah! Christians, what greater curse can befall a rational creature than to live one single minute without loving God! O, love him then, and love him effectually, in doing his blessed will in the commandments he has given you. Obey them with a perfect purity of mind, and humility of heart. Do, and teach them, that you may deserve to be called *great in the kingdom of Heaven, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ may be given to you who believe.* Which is the grace of pleasing God in this life, and the bliss of enjoying him for your eternal, ineffable reward in the next. Which, &c. in the name, &c.

SERMON

S E R M O N

On the Fourteenth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MATTHEW vi. 24, 33.

No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will endure the one, and condemn the other. You cannot serve GOD and mammon. Seek therefore first the kingdom of GOD and his justice.

I Promised you, last Sunday, Christians, to explain to you the several commandments of GOD, in particular, when the text, of either the epistle or gospel, of the day, shall afford me the opportunity. And, what fairer opportunity could I wish, than that which the words of my text present me with? *Seek first the kingdom of GOD and his justice*, says your divine Redeemer. GOD then and his justice are to be preferr'd by you to all the works of his hands, and consequently to all other beings besides himself. For, there is no other intermediate existence between GOD and his creatures. Whatever is not GOD himself his creature, and whatever is created is inferior to GOD and dependent upon GOD. To this divine Being then, this supreme Author of all things, your Saviour tells you, you are to give the sovereign preference before all other beings. And what is this but confirming and enforcing that commandment which his eternal Father gave to his people, by the hand of Moses, *Thou shalt not have any strange gods before Me*? This is the first and greatest of the Ten Commandments which GOD has given you, and, therefore this justly demands the first place in your study and practice. Without fulfilling this, vain and fruitless will be all your endeavours to comply with the rest. And, even, if you could observe them, what would, or could they avail you, while you fulfill them not in obedience to the Lord who commands you? If you seek not his kingdom and justice before all other things: If you place any thing out of him, above him, or upon a level with him in your actions, your thoughts, or your wishes; You have strange gods before him, GOD is no longer your Sovereign, your Lord, or your Master. No, the beings you love preferably to, or equally with him, are your gods. Though to speak properly, it is absolutely impossible for you to love or serve any object equally with him. What you do not wholly prefer him

to, you must prefer to him. The mind, or heart of man, like his eye, is limited and determined to one single principal object, and cannot tend different ways. *No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or, he will endure the one, and condemn the other.* This is unalterably true, whenever the masters are divided and opposit in their commands, or the affection and services of the dependences are not subordinate. There is no medium then between your loving and enduring GOD, and hating and despising the commands of every other being which are not subordinate to his, and your doing quite the contrary, In a word, *You cannot serve GOD and mammon*, No, my sovereign Lord GOD, thou art a jealous GOD, who wilt have no sharer in the hearts of thy own creating. How long then, says the prophet *Elias*; and how long, say I, *how long*, O giddy mortals, *balt you on two sides*. If the Lord be GOD, follow him; but if Baal be GOD, even follow him. In short, either serve GOD as you should do by serving him above all things; or renounce him and have strange Gods before him. For, *you cannot serve GOD and mammon*. You have no other chance then for any part with GOD than faithfully to comply with this great commandment of having no strange Gods of your own erecting in the presence of the Lord your GOD: to avoid which you must seek first and before all things him and his justice. To direct you in which will be the purpose of my present discourse, which I shall purposely divide into three parts, the better to shew you,

- I. The good which you are commanded to do.
- II. The evil you are forbidden to practice:

And

- III. To give you some useful instructions towards complying with these great duties.

“O thou, dear, gracious GOD, who mercifully deignest to be jealous of these useless hearts of ours, O, take them under thy tuition, and so instruct, and warm them, with the holy zeal, they ought to have for thee, as that they may be ever wholly thine.”

I. Every

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I. Every one of the commandments is a kind of two-fold precept, enjoining some good which is to be practiced, and forbidding some evil, which ought to be avoided. The good then, which you are directed to practice, by the first commandment, is, to acknowledge God, for what he is, the supreme Lord and author of all things, to love honour and serve him, as such, above, and before, all things, and with your all, yourselves even included. Now, this cannot be done, but by *faith, hope, charity, and religion*. You stand in need of *faith*, to acknowledge and pay that deference which is due to his unsearchable, yet infallible truth, from your shallow fallacious understandings. It is by *hope*, that you must be enabled to rely on the all-knowing infinity of his wisdom, for the blessings you want from his providential care. By *charity*, it is that you can alone be taught to respect, love and prefer him, to all beside him, as your sovereign good, worthy all your affection. And finally, it is by the virtue of *religion* that you are instructed to pay him the homage you owe to him, as the first author and source of all things.

Faith, then, is a *divine* virtue, a gift of God in our souls, a gift which all may have for asking it, and a gift by which we are enabled to hold for undoubted infallible truth, whatever God has revealed to his church. This virtue has different acts, express'd by the divines in the following *Latin* terms, *Credere DEUM, Credere in DEUM*, that is, in *English*, the believing God to be, and the believing in God. The believing God to be, imports nothing more than the steadfast belief, which in spite of the most atheistical dispositions of heart, all men must, and actually have of the existence and essential attributes of the Almighty. And, O, the exalted riches of thy wisdom, knowledge and other ineffable attributes, my God! How immense must not the glory of thy Majesty be which can force the acknowledgement of thy existence, from the corrupted understandings, even, of those reprobate fools, whose flagitious lives, and self reproaching consciences, make them sigh, and say in their hearts, *there is no God!* But, ah, why do the hearts of these miscreants bely their intellects; why do they vainly wish, my God, that thou wast not what thou art, but, that the guilt of the crimes, they are too wicked to repent and atone for, makes them tremble at the rigor of that justice which they know to be inseparable from thee? The believing in God, is that belief by which we adhere to all the doctrines and mysteries, which the divine Majesty has been pleased to reveal to us, by the means of Christ and his church. And this, O, eternal truth, how can we refuse to do, while we believe thee to be the God of verity, who neither can't deceive, nor be thyself deceived; whilst

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thou has't commanded us to obey the church of thy establishing, and promised to guide that church into all truth? And, moreover, the believing in God, signifies, that filial confidence and trust we ought to repose, first and chiefly in God, in all our temporal as well as eternal exigencies.

The other next *divine* virtue, call'd *hope*, is a gift by which you are enabled to rely on the goodness of the almighty for eternal life, and all the blessings necessary and conducive to it, or consistent with it; as well as for grace, particularly to make a right use of the rest. The acts of this are prayer and ejaculation, fervour of tongue and steadiness of heart. And, O all-powerful infinit wisdom of my God! Who can despond or call thy mercies in question, whose unlimited mightiness is capable of doing every thing which is best for us, and whose immense Knowledge cannot be deceived in what is best for us.

It is by the virtue of *Charity*, I told you, Christians, if you remember that you must be inspired to love God above all things, yourselves not excepted. This is one of the grand duties enjoind us by this commandment, and the chief of them. But, O Dear, heavenly Lord, what need is there to command us this. Can we avoid loving thee above all things, in whom alone our sovereign joy consists. Can we have souls and not repay, with all the love we are capable of, that sweet excess of goodness, which makes thee ever watchful to exert thy infinit power and wisdom, to do whatever is best for us?

These, Christians, these then are the *divine* virtues God requires you, by this commandment, to be possess'd of. And, if you set out in his service with these, they will naturally beget in your souls the moral virtue of *religion*. A virtue, this, by which you are taught to render God the honour and external homage due to him, and to render them in the manner which the Church prescribes to you. That is, in few words: To adore Almighty God, as your sovereign author, to serve him faithfully, and to give him tokens of your gratitude, love and reverence, by submitting to the doctrines and pious practices taught you by his avow'd ministers. Such are, for example, the praying to him reverently on your knees, the addressing him with devotion, the offering sacrifices to him of mortification, alms-deeds and thanksgiving, the assisting frequently and decently at divine service, but especially, and always, when in your power, on days of obligation, and, finally, the approaching, with respect, frequency and fervour to the holy sacraments. And, O divinely, gracious benefactor! Is it too much for us to do this little for love of thee and in compliance with thy blessed will, when thou has't done and suffer'd so much for and by us?

N

II. And

II. And yet this you are absolutely, tho' tacitly, enjoin'd by the first commandment, and therefore cannot serve God but are servants of *mammon* as often as you neglect the practice of these virtues. The sins opposit to these are *first* the disbelieving, or doubting of, any truth which regards the goodness, greatness, or wisdom of God; *secondly* the despairing of the divine mercy, building too much on your own strength, or neglecting to recur to him in time of need. *Thirdly* to hate God, not to love him, or what is little better to love him less or only equally with yourselves or other creatures; to murmur at his providence, or not confide in or thank him for it. And lastly to be slothful in his worship and service, by slighting the precepts and ceremonies with which his church directs you to honour and serve him, or else to be any ways accessory to the sloth, negligence, omission, or irreverence of others.

But more especially opposit to the positive injunctions of this commandment is, the paying to any other being, the sovereign honour due to God alone. This is forbidden in express terms, by the very negative part of this precept itself, *Thou shalt not have any strange Gods before me*. Not that the Almighty in these words acknowledges, or allows you to suppose the existence of any divine, supreme being, other than himself. No; All that can be infer'd from this, is a strict prohibition to you of setting up, in your affection or esteem, any of his creatures in competition with his sacred Sovereign Majesty, or paying to those or any of them, the supreme worship which is justly due to him, and only to him. A crime is this which you may be, and ah, Christians! how often are you guilty of innumerable manners. The principal and most common ways however of falling into this gross kind of impiety are, *First*, in opposition to faith, the calling in question any of the perfections of God, or perversely admitting a plurality of Gods; the having recourse to conjurers, fortune-tellers, dreams, auguries, omens, superstitious scrolls, herbs, words, enchantments, spells, prayers said backwards, or giving credit to any other such prophane and sacrilegious absurdities. And O thou, infathomable wisdom! What indignity do not they offer to thee, who presume by such narrow means, to dive into thy hidden secrets, who cannot know thee at all, without knowing that thy judgments are incomprehensible, and thy ways unsearchable! *Secondly* you may offend against this negative part of the divine precept, by expecting from Satan or his ministers by such means, that information or succour which God alone has the power of dispensing: Or even by placing a greater dependence on fortune, and second causes than on him and his all-sufficient providence. Ah foolish mortals, if God is not your refuge, whither will you fly for redress? Who

can give what he is resolved to deny you? For *What God is great as our God*, says the *Psalmist*? And what succour can you hope from him, while you are mortally offending him, by the dependence you fix on things infinitely inferior to him. No: My God, thou art too just a Lord, not to disappoint the hopes and curious expectations of all those who impiously seek any knowledge or redress from thee, yet seek it out of thee. For, *thy way*, as thy prophet assures us, is *in the sea*, the abyss of thy infinit unsearchable wisdom, *and thy paths in many waters*: The track of thy miraculous providence, is not to be trodden by mortal enquirers, *and thy steps shall not be known*.

If you want to be more fully convinced of this infallible truth, cast but an eye, Christians, on the faithful *Daniel*. In the sixth chapter of his prophecy, we are informed, that *Darius* placed him and two more, as princes and chief ministers under him over the whole kingdom of the *Medes*, and *Perians*. The other two were nothing less solicitous, and perhaps nothing less qualified to execute their important office, to the satisfaction of their sovereign than *Daniel*. But still with all their solicitude and natural abilities, they were not able to keep upon an equality with him; and why so, but because their dependence was on their own little arts, and other vicious means, whereas all *Daniel's* recourse for assistance was to God alone, the God who created him, and raised him to the exalted station he was in. Therefore, was it, says the sacred text, that *Daniel pass'd all the princes and governors, because there was the spirit of God more ample in him*. This, however, the princes were too much hood-wink'd by their passions to see. They knew indeed that *Daniel* was inseparably attached to the honour and service of God, but would not be convinced that it was the protection of that supreme Lord, which secured to him the favour of his earthly prince; and therefore resolved to make his fidelity to God, a means of destroying him in the favour of his mortal sovereign. For such was the uprightness of this virtuous courtier, that they could find no method to make him revolt against the commands of one of these masters, but by rendering the commands of the inferior inconsistent with those of the superior. Accordingly they set about their infernal device, and draw the king into signing an edict, by which all his subjects were commanded to transfer for thirty days, the sovereign honour and confidence they owed to their Creator, to their mortal prince, a creature like themselves, and the helpless work of his Almighty hands! And that under no less horrible a penalty, than the being exposed without redress, to the devouring rage of hungry lions. In fact, the unguarded monarch sign'd the impious decree, and *Daniel* set it at defiance. O imprudent

indifferently

indiscreetly zealous *Daniel*, you would cry, in such a circumstance, Christians, what a rashness is this to expose thyself to inevitable ruin. How durst thou openly disobey thy sovereign, or where is the necessity of doing it. Surely God will forgive a disobedience to him, where so much hazard attends the obeying him. Has't thou no regard for the commands of thy king? No fear of the rage of voracious lions. Yes, yes, *Daniel* would reply, if he lived in your days, I honour the one, and tremble at the others as much as you could do. But God commands me to honour, and rely upon him, and my earthly sovereign commands me to disobey my God; which then am I to obey? Both I cannot, *no man can serve two masters at once*, where their commands are so opposit. And surely God *must be obey'd rather than men*. If the rage of lions is to be fear'd, how much more horrible is it to fall into the vengeful hands of the living God! If I disobey him, what created power can screen me from the fury of the demons he will commit me to? But if to honour him, I disregard the commands and menaces of men; he who created me, and raised me to what I am, he who creates monarchs themselves, and gives to lions their strength, can secure to me the favour of the one, and protect me from the fury of the others. It was even so, *Daniel* was thrown into the den of lions; yet not to be devoured, or even molested by them, but to whet their appetites for crushing his enemies, who were afterwards thrown to them for food in his stead. Ah Christians! What an irresistible contrast is here, of the safety of relying on God, and giving him the preference to all things in your minds and hearts, and the ruin which attends the giving away his honour to strangers, or, in other words, the erecting to yourself *any strange Gods before him*. The impious princes, the servants of mammon built all their ambitious hopes on their own artifices, and vicious means independent on God, and God disappointed them, they lost their prince's favour, lost their lives, and fell the unpitied prey to their own infidelity. *Daniel* set all powers at defiance, to maintain his fidelity to the Almighty, and the Almighty rewarded him even in this life, with a compleat triumph over the rage of lions, over his enemies, and over the heart of the very prince, whom for his sake he had disobey'd. Can you then, Christians, hesitate any longer, to repose your whole faith and confidence, in this all-powerful gracious God. No, my God, from this minute forward, Thou alone shalt be our God; no longer will we *have any strange Gods before Thee*. Henceforth be banish'd from our hearts, every idol inclination, which is wide of thee. No, longer will we in opposition to that charity which thou demandest of us, love thee less, or only as much as thy less lovely creatures. No more in oppo-

sition to our religious duty, will we set thy truth and precepts at defiance, by schism, heresy, sacrilege or superstition. No: Full sorry are we from our inmost souls, that ever we offended so powerful, so wise, and good a God, by the perverse neglect of thy tremendous worship in public or in private, or by the least irreverence we have committed in the homage due to thee from us. And to atone for this the best we are able, our only study hereafter shall be, to love, to serve, and honour thee above all else, to pray to thee in public and in private, with all the faith, the confidence and piety, which through thy grace we can attain to. And rather will we suffer all the deaths, which diabolic cruelty or malice can invent, than ever once consent again to offend thee by one mortal sin.

Such, Christians, such is the disposition you must be in to be faithful observers of this sacred commandment. And now tell me, I beseech you, if you can, what is there so grievous, in your practising the good which it enjoins you, or in avoiding the evil it forbids you, that you cannot find in your hearts to obey it, with a perfect compliance. If there is no grievance in it, consult your own interest, then, by obeying it as becomes Christians; and that you may be the better enabled so to do, I shall now proceed to give you some instructions, towards the accomplishment of this great duty.

III. And what more can I say, than what your divine Redeemer says to you, in the words of my text, *seek first the kingdom of God and his justice*. All I can add is, that your own interest is concern'd in doing this. You see, and he tells you, that *no man can serve two masters*, who are not subordinate to each other, and whose commands are opposit. The reason is plain, as the heart of man is limited to one principal object *either he will love the one and hate the other, or he will endure the one and condemn the other*. In short, you cannot serve God and mammon. As often therefore as you neglect to *seek first the kingdom of God and his justice*, it is mammon you serve and not God. Whereas St. Peter tells you in the name of the holy Ghost, that God *is to be obey'd rather than men*. And what blessings can you hope or expect from him, when you have recourse to any other being independent on or to him? For doing thus you erect another God in your hearts, in opposition to him in his commandment which expressly forbids you to *have any strange Gods before him*.

Is it not then, you'll say perhaps, contrary to this commandment to pray to saints, or to kneel before their relics, or any devout pictures and graven images, as the words of the precept itself seem to express. No, I answer: after the manner which the church prescribes and practices, it is not. We adore

God

GOD alone with a supreme worship and to him alone address our hopes and vows as to our sovereign help. To the saints we only pay an inferior homage as to his favorites and our friends and intercessors with him. So that all the honour we give to them is ultimately refunded in him. Nor is it true that Catholics pray to relics, pictures or images. No, We are, thank GOD, too well instructed not to know that those inanimate things cannot assist us. Indeed we kneel before them and externally revere them with a relative worship, referring all our homage to the saints and mysteries they represent and remind us of, all which however we ultimately refund in that great and good GOD, whom we adore and magnify as the supreme source and end not only of those relics, pictures and images, but even of the saints and mysteries themselves. The kneeling then before such representations is only design'd as a secondary means to elevate the mind and fix the attention on pious subjects by the help of external objects. Wherefore the respecting them can no more without absurdity, be deem'd idolatry, than the kissing or respecting the picture or letter of a near relation or intimate friend. It is well known by melancholy experience that loose and unseemly pictures will raise vicious ideas in the mind, and are therefore judged worthy of the greatest detestation, by all men of virtue and solidity. Surely then some respect is due to such devout objects as are presented to our view, to help us to virtuous pious ideas at the time we most stand in need of them, and when our common enemy is the most busy to raise in our imagination every thing that is opposit to the business of prayer. This reasoning will appear the more weighty to every-one who does but reflect on the corruption of human nature, which is so averst from all that is spiritual, that it stands in need of every help to devotion. And that devout objects are some help to it, cannot be denied.

The END of the Third Quarter of the Ecclesiastical YEAR.

But to reassume the thread of my discourse, You can now, Christians, no longer plead ignorance for any breach of this sacred commandment. Beware then of being perversely disobedient to it. I have told you the several obligations it lays you under, and it is your interest as well as duty, to lay hold on every means which may help you to the grace necessary for performing it with fidelity. The most effectual means however will be to make frequent and fervent acts to GOD of *faith, hope, and charity*. My GOD I steadfastly believe in all the truths which thou and thy holy church reveal to me, and am ready to part with life rather than ever depart from thy holy faith, to follow the illusion of my own fallacious comprehension. I hope in thy mercy, place a firm confidence in thy provident bounty, and rely wholly on thy wisdom to direct me in all my concerns. Yes, my GOD, I and all here present, love thee and love thee above all things for thy adorable sake alone, because thou only art above all things lovely.

Whoever loves GOD from his heart will often be warm with these devout sentiments. He may truly be said to love GOD, who makes it the daily study of his life, to do what he knows to be the most agreeable in the eyes of the Almighty. But he cannot be said to love him at all, who seeks not first in all things him and his justice. Do this then, Christians, that you may fulfill this law. Let GOD be your first view in all things, and possessing him, *all things consistent with the enjoyment of him will be given to you besides*, all things you can really want, or reasonably wish either in this life, or in the world to come. Whither I beseech GOD of his infinit Mercy safely to conduct you. *In the Name, &c.*

SERMON

S E R M O N

On the Fifteenth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. LUKE vii. 12.

When JESUS came nigh to the gate of the city of Naim, behold a dead man was carried forth, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow, and a great multitude of the city with her. Whom when our Lord had seen, being moved with mercy upon her he say'd to her, weep not. And to the dead man, young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead, sat up and began to speak. And fear took them all; and they magnified God, saying, that God hath visited his people.

THE major part of readers, of the Holy Scriptures, are but mere superficial attenders to the sacred doctrines and spiritual treasures therein contain'd. The indolence of some, and the pride of others, are the real causes why, out of so many Christians, who apply themselves, even with a devout intention, to this holy study, so very few reap benefit from it. Some give themselves up to such a shameful indolence of mind, as blinds their intellects with a kind of lethargic stupidity, and suffers them neither to see nor come within the reach of any thing beyond an outside comprehension of sensitive ideas. And these, while they read, or hear, the Word of God, wholly burying their attention in the bare letter of the text, lose all the delight and profit they might reap from the instructive mysteries, which are figuratively couch'd under the letter. Others again, led into the opposit extreme, by the eagerness of an overstraining pride and curiosity, more from a vain ambition of shewing their penetration, than from the humble desire of gaining holy knowledge, scornfully pass by the most obvious beauties, to run in search of the hidden. And these, in reading the sacred Scriptures, heedlessly overlook'd the rich instructions offered them in the literal sense, to pry into the more sublime mysteries contained in the allegory, which, however, are too exalted for the approaches of curiosity and presumption. Whence it too often happens, that wilfully turning their backs on the one, they are justly dazzled out of the sight of the others: And precipitate into the most absurd depths of ignorance and error, by presuming to soar above the humble bounds of their station and capacity. What wonder then is it, that these, however good

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- I. The important instructions, which your Saviour gives you in the literal sense of this passage: And
- II. Those which may be drawn from the more sublime allegory, or figure it includes.

O

"Deign

GOD alone with a supreme worship and to him alone address our hopes and vows as to our sovereign help. To the saints we only pay an inferior homage as to his favorites and our friends and intercessors with him. So that all the honour we give to them is ultimately refunded in him. Nor is it true that Catholics pray to relics, pictures or images. No, We are, thank GOD, too well instructed not to know that those inanimate things cannot assist us. Indeed we kneel before them and externally revere them with a relative worship, referring all our homage to the saints and mysteries they represent and remind us of, all which however we ultimately refund in that great and good GOD, whom we adore and magnify as the supreme source and end not only of those relics, pictures and images, but even of the saints and mysteries themselves. The kneeling then before such representations is only design'd as a secondary means to elevate the mind and fix the attention on pious subjects by the help of external objects. Wherefore the respecting them can no more without absurdity, be deem'd idolatry, than the kissing or respecting the picture or letter of a near relation or intimate friend. It is well known by melancholy experience that loose and unseemly pictures will raise vicious ideas in the mind, and are therefore judged worthy of the greatest detestation, by all men of virtue and solidity. Surely then some respect is due to such devout objects as are presented to our view, to help us to virtuous pious ideas at the time we most stand in need of them, and when our common enemy is the most busy to raise in our imagination every thing that is opposit to the business of prayer. This reasoning will appear the more weighty to every-one who does but reflect on the corruption of human nature, which is so averst from all that is spiritual, that it stands in need of every help to devotion. And that devout objects are some help to it, cannot be denied.

The END of the Third Quarter of the Ecclesiastical YEAR.

But to reassume the thread of my discourse, You can now, Christians, no longer plead ignorance for any breach of this sacred commandment. Beware then of being perversely disobedient to it. I have told you the several obligations it lays you under, and it is your interest as well as duty, to lay hold on every means which may help you to the grace necessary for performing it with fidelity. The most effectual means however will be to make frequent and fervent acts to GOD of *faith, hope, and charity*. My GOD I steadfastly believe in all the truths which thou and thy holy church reveal to me, and am ready to part with life rather than ever depart from thy holy faith, to follow the illusion of my own fallacious comprehension. I hope in thy mercy, place a firm confidence in thy provident bounty, and rely wholly on thy wisdom to direct me in all my concerns. Yes, my GOD, I and all here present, love thee and love thee above all things for thy adorable sake alone, because thou only art above all things lovely.

Whoever loves GOD from his heart will often be warm with these devout sentiments. He may truly be said to love GOD, who makes it the daily study of his life, to do what he knows to be the most agreeable in the eyes of the Almighty. But he cannot be said to love him at all, who seeks not first in all things him and his justice. Do this then, Christians, that you may fulfill this law. Let GOD be your first view in all things, and possessing him, *all things* consistent with the enjoyment of him *will be given to you besides*, all things you can really want, or reasonably wish either in this life, or in the world to come. Whither I beseech GOD of his infinit Mercy safely to conduct you. *In the Name, &c.*

SERMON

S E R M O N

On the Fifteenth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. LUKE vii. 12.

When Jesus came nigh to the gate of the city of Naim, behold a dead man was carried forth, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow, and a great multitude of the city with her. Whom when our Lord had seen, being moved with mercy upon her he say'd to her, weep not. And to the dead man, young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead, sat up and began to speak. And fear took them all; and they magnified God, saying, that God hath visited his people.

THE major part of readers, of the Holy Scriptures, are but mere superficial attenders to the sacred doct'rins and spiritual treasures therein contain'd. The indolence of some, and the pride of others, are the real causes why, out of so many Christians, who apply themselves, even with a devout intention, to this holy study, so very few reap benefit from it. Some give themselves up to such a shameful indolence of mind, as blinds their intellects with a kind of lethargic stupidity, and suffers them neither to see nor come within the reach of any thing beyond an outside comprehension of sensitive ideas. And these, while they read, or hear, the Word of God, wholly burying their attention in the bare letter of the text, lose all the delight and profit they might reap from the instructive mysteries, which are figuratively couch'd under the letter. Others again, led into the opposit extreme, by the eagerness of an overstraining pride and curiosity, more from a vain ambition of shewing their penetration, than from the humble desire of gaining holy knowledge, scornfully pass by the most obvious beauties, to run in search of the hidden. And these, in reading the sacred Scriptures, heedlessly overlook'd the rich instructions offered them in the literal sense, to pry into the more sublime mysteries contained in the allegory, which, however, are too exalted for the approaches of curiosity and presumption. Whence it too often happens, that wilfully turning their backs on the one, they are justly dazzled out of the sight of the others: And precipitate into the most absurd depths of ignorance and error, by presuming to soar above the humble bounds of their station and capacity. What wonder then is it, that these, however good

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O

Deign

"Deign then, O thou Eternal Wisdom of the Father, to give us that true, humble industry, by which alone we can be worthy to reap instruction from thy blessed Word, that seeing we may see, and hearing understand and practice the saving truths which thou hast any way reveal'd to us.

I. The miracle recorded in this day's Gospel is rich in the most useful instructions, whether we take it in a literal or a figurative sense. Here is a venerable widow weeping over her beloved deceased son in his coffin. Her awful distress and reverend aspect added to her amiable character and hapless circumstance draw a multitude of inhabitants from the city to share in her grief, and by joining with her in the funeral lamentations over his grave, to alleviate the sorrow which that melancholy office must sharpen in one so near to the deceased as a mother. So moving a scene, once it reach'd the eyes, could not fail affecting the tender compassionate soul of Christ. If her grief was pathetic enough to force a fellow-feeling from the hearts of inconsiderate mortals; where is the wonder that it should reap relief from that great sympathiser in human woes, that gracious parent of orphans and protector of widows?

Now if you do but seriously consider even the bare letter of this gospel; what a rare example, Christians, does not your divine master set you in this passage of the tenderness with which you ought to be affected by the distresses of one-another! Christ, you see, approaches an afflicted comfortless woman, without waiting for the ceremony of being call'd to her assistance; tho' he had the right to expect it. And not content to sooth her with words of comfort, removes the very cause of her discomfort. Will not you then, O mortals, be henceforth ashamed to look on the miseries of your fellow-creatures, without the least emotion of pity, when your Saviour is so sensibly touch'd by them as to work a miracle in the behalf of the wretched? What, my sacred Saviour! Shal't thou, who was't no more subject to the sting of worldly afflictions than it pleased thee to be by choice, shal't thou, I say, dear Lord, have been so affected by the sufferings of others, as not to be able in some sense to pass a poor woman in tears, without relieving her at the expence of a miracle? And yet shall every-one of us, wretches ourselves and liable every moment to all the miseries which any of us feel, be nevertheless so harden'd in cruelty as to behold the pains, the wants or necessities of our brother sufferers with dry eyes and an unconcern'd heart. Ah never let it be said, Christians, if you mean to pass for disciples of Christ, if you wish even to be thought human.

There is a something so divinely great in the making, or even endeavouring to make a sad heart glad, that we cannot help paying a kind of homage even to mortals, where we see them engaged in so noble an undertaking. Mercy is the darling attribute of God. This his divine majesty exerts and boasts of in sacred scripture more, and more often, than any other of his infinit perfections. That man therefore who makes it his business to remove, or to lessen where he cannot remove the sufferings of his fellow-creatures, of whatever nation, temper, state or religion they be, and does it for the pure love of God and charity to his image in want, must necessarily approach the nearest to God in likeness, inasmuch as he struggles to imitate him in the favorite perfection of his God-head. And whatever frailties such a man may have been subject to, whatever vices he may have been guilty of, he has much more room to hope for mercy from God, than another who has no other fault or crime than that of wanting mercy and compassion towards his suffering neighbour.

So grateful to God, is the practice of works of mercy, towards your indigent brethren, Christians, that your blessed Redeemer places it among the beatitudes *Blessed are the merciful*, says he, *for they shall find mercy*. Now, if it be true, that every exception establishes a rule to the contrary, as all philosophers and divines agree it does; may we not hence infallibly conclude, that none but the merciful shall reap the benefit of that mercy, which all stand in need of from God. For O thou all-seeing Majesty, in whose sight, the best and purest of our actions are not free from blemish! Where is the soul in this life, so just, so spotless, as not to stand in need of thy mercy in the next? In vain, then, O Christians, will any other good actions of yours, plead to God for mercy upon you, if you yourselves are void of mercy and compassion to your brethren. Blessed then, O thrice, *Blessed are the merciful*, for they shall find mercy.

And can you doubt, Beloved, on the other hand, of the future wretchedness of such, as are strangers to the practice of this divine virtue? What can be more odious and unnatural in the eyes not only of God, but even of wretched man, than a human breast void of humanity? And how is it possible for that breast to be human, which cannot commiserate? When humanity, as a virtue, is properly nothing other, than the tender emotion of sympathizing in the evils of another? May we not then boldly draw from the words of our Saviour, this dreadful conclusion, *curst are the unmerciful*, for they shall find no mercy? It is matter of fact, Christians, and I will prove it to you. You have no title, no claim, to the divine Mercy, but by the mediation of your Redeemer Christ. And what share can you have in

in the benefits of his mediation, without abiding in him? And this you cannot do, without practising mercy, after his example, to such as stand in need of it. *He who says that he abides in Christ*, says St. John, to make his words good, *must walk just as he walk'd*. Unless then, you have the same tenderness, compassion and fellow-feeling, for your suffering neighbour, which he had, you walk not as he walk'd; and consequently you abide not in him, you are not his disciples, but hypocrites, pharisees of his sacred name, and false pretenders to the benefits of his mediation, and the mercy of God, which that alone can secure to you. Why did he stoop his glory, to take upon himself the flesh of man; why did he live a painful life in that flesh, and submit that flesh at length, to a cruel and ignominious death, but to practice mercy to you, O Christians? And what were all the actions of his life, the cures he perform'd on the sick, the blind, the lame, but so many practical lessons to you of that mercy, which you must exert towards one-another? And why did he in the gospel for this day, work a miracle of the most extraordinary nature, in calling a dead man back to life, but that, by shewing his tender mercy to the deceased son, and his surviving distressed mother, he might enforce to you by example, as well as precept, the new commandment he has given you, that *you love one-another, even as he has loved you*. It is plain then from the letter of this gospel, and infinit other passages of the sacred life of Christ, that you can have no share in him and his mercy, without loving one-another, as he has loved you, and being as diligent to relieve the distressed of your suffering brethren, as he has graciously shewn himself in doing mercy to you. O! I could dwell forever on this subject, and never want matter to moralize upon. There is something so sublimely excellent, and at the same time so essential to a Christian, in the tenderness of fraternal charity, that I could never be tired with preaching this duty to you; and you ought never to be tired with hearing it, or putting it in practice. For 'tis chiefly by the practice of this virtue, you must attain to the accomplishment of the law of grace. *Bear ye the burdens of one-another*, says St. Paul, *and so will you fulfill the law of Christ*.

Thus much might suffice to shew you, beloved, the rich instruction you may reap from a devout attention, to the bare literal sense of this wonderful passage, in the life of Christ. There is however another very useful moral annex to it, which I cannot forbear taking some notice of; because it may be of the greater consolation, to the unhappy, amidst their most grievous misfortunes. Wherefore, Christians, after having labour'd to convince such of you as are at ease, of the duty of feeling for others, let me now say something to those of you,

who are unfortunate, that you may learn to feel less for yourselves.

However widely you may seem situated, in your miseries from every prospect of relief; be assured that your evils can never grow so desperate, as to be past the power of God to redress. And therefore, if you place a steady confidence in him, you have reason to think, that he will even exert that power to redress them. That it is in his power, the miracle recorded in this gospel, is a sufficient conviction: And that it is his inclination, we have his own sacred word for it. *Call upon me in the day of tribulation*, says he, *and I will bear you*.

In your worldly concerns, once you make the filial trust you owe to your Maker give place to solicitude, anxiety, or despair; you do him the basest injury he is capable of receiving from you. 'Tis an argument that you, either call in question his wisdom and power to relieve you, or doubt of the riches of his goodness. And therefore in so doing, you discharge God of the care of providing for you, and justify his rigour in leaving you to yourself. And what prospect of relief you can then have, when the Almighty withdraws his providence from watching over you, I leave you to consider. This I know, that on the contrary, if unshaken amidst the most seemingly comfortless labyrinths of life, you still persist in your reliance on his protection and assistance, sheltering yourself by hope under his wings; you will then lay all the business of your deliverance upon him: He will make it a kind of ineffable obligation on himself, in virtue of his unalterable promise to assist you; and by ways unsearchable to you, will, if your good be at stake, release you from your trials. Or if he judges it more expedient for you to have them continued; he will at least help you to such advantages from your temptations, as will strengthen you to bear them. For so infinitely good is the Divine Being, that, if you trust in him, *He will not suffer you to be tempted above what you can bear; with pleasure and profit*, as St. Paul says. In a word, if you place all your hopes, amidst your griefs, in the power, wisdom and goodness of God; you properly dwell in him and must be relieved by him, as he has promised you by the mouth of his Royal Prophet. *He who dwells in the help of the most High, shall abide in the protection of the God of heaven*.

But what need have we to recur to the Divine promises, when we have so remarkable an instance of the Divine Goodness, in fulfilling them. It is a vulgar proverb, that *while there is life there is hope*. But your blessed Saviour to recall you from this confined, this narrow way of thinking, exerts his Almighty power to raise a dead man to life. For why, think you, did he work this stupendous miracle chiefly, but to convince you, O desponding mortals,

tals, that your hopes ought to survive even life itself. Learn then, O Christians, into whatever degree of distress, your affairs or occurrences may plunge you, never to throw off that filial reliance, that religious trust, which you ought in all events, to honour the divine bounty with. And be well assured, that however great confidence you repose in God; your hopes will always fall infinitely short of his power, wisdom and goodness to protect you. And with such a protection, O Christian souls, what evils have you to fear? What blessings may you not expect? A confidence like this, was the only solace, which remain'd to the afflicted widow in this gospel: Such a one alone, was capable of buoying her up from sinking under her weight of woe: And this, you see, entitled her to such a share of divine favour and assistance, that the Son of God could not overlook her distress, nor even forbear working a miracle to dry up her tears, and reward her affiance, by granting her even more, than she could expect or hope for. Endeavour therefore, O afflicted Christian, whoever you are, or whatever your affliction may be, to copy after this confident widow, in your filial submission to the all-wise dispositions of God. And be ready to reap amidst your griefs, all the comfort which this sacred passage seriously attended to, is capable of, affording you even in a literal sense.

II. Yet if we go farther Christians, and examine into the allegory of the holy text; we shall find it equally rich in salutary instructions, and big with such figurative truths, as are extremely important, inasmuch as they concern the major part of mankind. Let us then briefly unfold them. Who is here meant by the venerable widow? Who are the multitude of citizens following her to the funeral? What is this only son of hers, whose decease they bewail; and to what end is he restored again living, to his afflicted mother? Hence you will be able to discern, whether or not there be any figurative truth wrapt up in this miraculous resurrection, which does or may concern any of you.

The pious widow then, is the holy Church militant of Christ, which is, and has been a widow ever since the crimes of her unnatural children, by an unprecedented parricide, brought her heavenly spouse Jesus, to the cruel and ignominious death of the cross. The multitude following her, are angels, inhabitants of the celestial city of the blessed, who attend to minister comfort to her, amidst her unutterable grief, for the loss of her only son. But who is this only son, what is his condition, and whence the cause? Alas her only son is every new fallen sinner, for the time: His condition is that of a soul, unanimated by grace, the cause of whose spiritual death, is the contagion of mortal sin.

The Church like a tender nurse, a fond mother, and a good shepherdess, looks on every Christian straying from the paths of Christian virtue, as the only child, the only one of her flock she has to take care of for a time. And therefore leaves the ninety nine, leaves the rest whom she can leave in safety, to pursue the one who is gone astray, to restore him to his spiritual health, and to bring him back again to the safe union of her flock. But alas, how often does it happen, that she has the discomfort, amidst all her care, to find the object of her pursuit, her only child made a prey to mortal sin, unanimated with grace; and consequently dead to her, dead to the angels, and dead to the benefits of God's mercy. Then, then it is, she laments with inconsolable grief, and the angels in compassion to her grief, attend on her, and join with her in prayer for the alleviation of her anguish. And then, if Christ, passing by, deigns to lend a pitying ear to her complaint, it may be, it is possible, that the unhappy deceased will, by means of a miracle, be restored again to the life of grace. But, O Christians! Think and shudder with thinking, how terrible a situation it must be for a soul to be in, to stand in need of a miracle, to be restored again to the grace of God. And yet such is the miserable plight of every Christian in mortal sin. For, as an eminent father of the Church observes, it requires a miracle infinitely greater from the hand of God, to move the free-will of a reluctant sinner to repentance, than it does to breathe life again into an unresisting lump of clay, which was once living before.

You then, you, O sinner, are this only child, over whom your holy mother the Church weeps: It is for you, that she and the angels take on; while you, lifeless, senseless, unhappy wretch, remain insensible of the deathful condition you are in; and, breathing only an irrational graceless reprobate existence, still riot, doat on, and fancy you live. Let every Christian search his own breast, and see if this has never been his miserable situation. And you, O pious souls, who read, or hear this gospel in a state of grace, call yourselves to an account. Have you never destroy'd in you that life of grace, you received in baptism? If you have, repent, tremble at the dreadful circumstance you plunged yourselves into: acknowledge the infinit bounty of God, in having wrought a miracle of grace to restore you again to the life of his love; and make it your business for the future, to lay out that life, that love, to the forwarding his glory, and your own eternal happiness.

Never build on receiving the like favour again. No: Your divine Saviour, suffer'd this widow, with her deceased son, to pass by him, as it was by accident, on purpose to teach you, that you are not to rely on such miracles, as ordinary effects of his bounty.

bounty. In fact, says the great *St. Augustin*, You ought rather to reflect, that tho' "God has graciously promised pardon to every sinner, who shall truly repent, yet he has no where promised time, or the grace of repentance, to those who shall sin." On the contrary, Beloved, God expects, and justly expects, you to be ever upon your guard against sin, and if through frailty you have once unhappily fallen into sin, when he vouchsafes to restore you again to the life of grace, he does it not, to embolden you to fall again, but to give you time, means and opportunity, to guard against it for the time to come, better than you did before: Since warn'd by your past misery, you cannot but have learnt by experience, the danger of relapsing. And this was the end, which Christ proposed in raising the dead youth of this gospel, not that he might lavish life again, as he had done, but that he might make a better use of what privation had taught him to prize.

The gospel therefore tells us, that the youth, when he was raised to life, immediately spoke, and Christ restored him to his mother. Do you then, O Christian penitents, practice the like. If you are conscious of having been spiritually in the same condition, and that by the grace of repentance, you are again alive; speak, *that is*, acknowledge your past sins, in a due manner, by humbling yourselves at the sacred tribunal of Confession; redouble your fervour for the future, and endeavour to make yourselves worthy, that Christ should mercifully restore you to the bosom of your holy mother his Church: That as you have caused her, and her angelic attendants, so much affliction hitherto, You may give them occasion to rejoice over your conversion hence-

forth, more than over the innocence of all the rest of the faithful. By this means, you will one day deserve to join with them in their rejoicings, over the conversion of others, when you yourselves shall be lifted triumphant to sit amidst them, and sing eternally in concert with them, that joyful canticle. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because he has visited and wrought the redemption of his people.*

Such are the useful instructions, Christians, which you may draw from a devout, diligent and humble attention to the word of God, in this holy gospel. And every part of the holy scriptures, are capable of yielding as rich a treasure of spiritual delight and profit. But, then Christians, to reap these valuable fruits, you must not give way to indolence, pride, or curiosity. No: read them, or hear them read with an eager zeal of knowing God's will, but still with lowliness of mind, and a desire only of knowing what he is pleased to unfold to you, by means of his ministers, or immediate inspiration under the direction of his Church. To which, whatever you do, be always ready cheerfully, to submit your sense and sentiments. In this disposition, you may safely read the holy scriptures, and in reading them, the divine grace will visit and enlighten your minds, that seeing you may see, and hearing you may understand. In a word, you will reap from them pleasure, profit and eternal salvation. And may even in this life echo to the saints, in the words of my text, by magnifying God, and saying God, *has visited his people.* For then you will be sensible of the visit of such a portion of his grace in this life, as will lift you to the fulness of his glory in the next. Which, &c. *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Sixteenth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. JOHN xii. 31. St. LUKE xiv. 11.

Now is the judgment of the world: Now the prince of this world shall be cast forth. And I, if I be exalted from the earth, will draw all things to myself--- Because every-one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

NOW indeed, Christians, *is the judgment of the world* come to an end, I hope with you. And now if you are really desirous of following Christ to his glory, *the prince of this world shall be*

cast forth, shall be banish'd in good earnest from the throne he has so long fix'd in your hearts: And the holy standard of Christ's cross shall be fix'd up, by your affections in the place of that banner of luxury, which you have hitherto lifted under. This is the day, on which the Church commemorates the glorious exaltation of that cross, on which your divine mediator pay'd down the generous ransom of his precious blood, to redeem you from the slavery of the world, to the freedom of his grace. What day then more proper, more seasonable than this, to turn your backs on that world, and pass the decisive

five judgment, the last sentence of oblivion upon it. For what other end, think you, has your holy Mother thus solemnly exposed to public view, this once ignoble badge of infamy, and now triumphant trophy of honour, but for the same gracious purpose, which induced her heavenly spouse Jesus, to beautify, raise and enrich it with his precious blood? And why, O mortals, did he himself prefer it before all the scepters of the earth, but, that by teaching you in practice to do the same, he might draw you from the tyrannic servitude of the world, and its empty allurements, to the blessed liberty of grace, and it's solid promises? *I, says he, if I be exalted from the earth, will draw all things to myself.* Yes, Beloved, yes. This was the ineffable design of your blessed Redeemer. For no other end, did he chuse to die an ignominious death on a painful cross, than mercifully to draw you to a perfect love, and imitation of him crucified; that humbled and crucified with him, you may be exalted by him to that glory, for which you were created, and which you never can attain to but by self-denial, voluntary crosses, and humiliation. *Because, as Christ himself tells you in the gospel for this Sunday, Every-one that exalteth himself shall be humbled. And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

Hence I gather two manifest truths; the *First* is, that all Christians are, by an indispensable tie of gratitude, bound to love and honour Christ crucified, with all the devotion they are capable of; and this they can never effectually express, without heartily embracing after his example, a life of crosses, and self-depression. The *Second* truth is, that without doing this, they cannot truly love even themselves: inasmuch as they cannot refuse renouncing the world and it's enjoyments, for the sake of Christ's cross, without renouncing their only true felicity.

To set this matter in an irresistible light, is the purpose of my present discourse: In which I mean to exhort you, for your own happiness, as well as for the honour of your Saviour Christ, to take up your cross and follow him, by shewing you:

- I. That it is your indispensable duty, to embrace a life of crosses and humiliation; since you cannot shew your gratitude to him, but by imitating him.
- II. That it is your absolute interest, because you cannot enter into his glory, by any other way than he enter'd: *And*
- III. Hence will undeniably result, the necessity and advantages of such a life.

"O deign then thou dear crucified Redeemer, to make thy sufferings dear to us. Let not thy exaltation on the cross be vain, but sweetly draw

"us all to thee, by a perfect imitation of thy true contempt of all that's earthly."

I. Christians then are under the indispensable duty, of embracing a life of crosses and humiliation, after the example of their humble crucified Saviour. They have no other means of shewing their gratitude to him, for the infinit favours he has mercifully bestow'd upon them, than to encounter every difficulty, to do and suffer all for the sake of following him to the end of life, with all the affection of their souls. Now, how can you follow your crucified Saviour, but by treading in his steps, and renouncing to all the empty enjoyments which the world may offer you, to imitate this divine pattern in his sufferings and humiliation? Christ himself tells you, Beloved, that this is the only way you have to prove yourselves his disciples. *He who will come after me, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* And if you will but seriously look into his life, you will find it throughout, sow'd with nothing other than humiliation and crosses, crosses and humiliation, so that if you mean to follow him at all, you have, truly speaking, nothing to follow him in without these.

All the different crosses and humiliations, which mankind can any wise be subject to, may be reduced to three sorts: Those which come immediately from the hand of God himself, those which come by his divine permission, from the hands of men, and those of a man's own seeking. All these your divine Saviour embraced for your sake. And therefore to be grateful disciples to him, you must embrace them all in your turn, for the sake of following him.

What was the laborious life he led for thirty years in retirement, toiling at the business of his putative father, earning his own, and part of his earthly parents bread, at the sweat of his brow? Was it not a voluntary hardship, a cross of his own seeking? He on whom the angels fed and were fatiated, could have supported himself and his holy family, on the same divine food which they feasted on. Or if he thought it necessary for his, and their human nature, to be fed by ordinary aliment, he could have created bread as well for them at Nazareth, as for four thousand in the desert, without either taking himself, or suffering his blessed Mother and her spouse, to take so much pains for an humble homely sustenance. But then this would not have been consistent with the self-denial lowliness and mortification, he came to practice himself, and to set you an example of. This would have afforded him ease and glory; and he came to embrace a life of crosses and humiliation, of a piece with the death of the cross, by which he was to be exalted to glory, and when exalted, to draw you, O Christians,

Christians, after him *I, if I be exalted from the earth, will draw all things to myself.*

Ah Christians, will you then murmur any longer, at the little struggles you meet with in life, to earn a support in your respective callings, when your Saviour had beat the path so smooth before you, by his example, no, if you mean to follow him, you must make a virtue of necessity, and do that by choice for his sake, which necessity makes inevitable. Be industrious then as your Saviour was, labour willingly, and sanctify your labours by doing them for, and offering them to him. Be not content to labour only for your own advantage, but after his example, labour even for the good of others, Never be high-minded, nor wait for humiliation till it overtakes you, but go in search of it; rejoice when you meet with it, and for the sake of your humble Saviour embrace it, whenever, or from whatever quarter it comes; else how can you make any grateful return, for the voluntary labours, crosses and humiliations he has encounter'd for love of you; how can you hope to follow him?

Follow him but with your eye, and what lengthen'd fasts, what frequent vigils, what weary days, and what painful nights, will you find him cheerfully go through, by choice, to pave the way for you to eternal glory. One time you will find him fasting in a desert, for forty days together, other times spending whole nights in prayer. Sometimes you will find him incessantly preaching, teaching, and taking long and laborious journeys to relieve the sick, to raise the dead, to comfort the distressed, to instruct the ignorant, and all his refreshment is, to sleep on the bare ground in the open air, with less accommodation than dumb animals. For tho' birds have their nests, and foxes have their holes, yet the mortified humble Son of Man, has not where to repose his head. But ah, sweet Lord, may'st thou not thank thyself: Art thou not Lord of all? Why then must thou submit to all this? Ah Christians, all this was more than Christ had need to do, even as mediator between You and God: His death alone had been sufficient to redeem you. But he graciously has made himself, not only your ransom, but example. *I have given you an example, says he, that as I have done, so you also may do.* He was all-pure and spotless; he had no sins to atone for, nor any rebellious appetites to subdue, and therefore with regard to himself, 'twas needless quite to fast as he did, to labour as he did, and to torment his tender flesh with lying hard and poorly as he did. But, ah Christians, it was not needless, with regard to you. How necessary 'twas for him to set you this example, appears too plainly from the reluctance which you still express, to practice any part of this, even after the example he has shewn you. If Christ had eat, and moved, and slept at ease; how readi-

ly would you have pleaded his example as a sanction for your present delicacy. But now you see his practice is quite opposit, what lame excuses are you forced to bring, for not so much as labouring to be like him. He all purity and grace, would absolutely suffer and be humbled, you all sin, and concupiscence will not, by choice, encounter any suffering, any humiliation, you can fly from. And why forsooth: Christ was the Son of God, and therefore could bear to fast for forty days, to toil incessantly, to lye hard; But you have not the sanctity, nor strength which he had. Ah foolish mortals, how wise you are at deceiving yourselves, and yet how unavailable are such evasions? Christ was Son of God, nay God himself, 'tis true: But then as God he could not suffer, nor be humbled, 'twas as man that he submitted to all this, and as man he was at least as delicately form'd as you can be, and as infirm as you. 'Tis true that he was holy; and so may you be, nay so you ought to be, as his disciples. And if you are not, the more reason have you to imitate his sufferings. 'Tis by so doing alone, that you can rise to the grace of conversion. *Turn to me, says the Lord, with all your heart in fasting, in sorrow and in tears.* The sufferings of Christ were voluntary, he might have exempted himself from them, if he had pleased, because he was all purity and grace. But the case, O mortals, is quite otherwise with you, you are all sinners, and therefore if Christ had never suffer'd any thing during his whole life, that could have been no sufficient reason for you to excuse yourselves, from satisfying the offended justice of God, by voluntary sufferings. Christ had no unruly passions to subdue: You have; and therefore, even if he had lived in constant ease, sufferings ought still to be your pursuit, in order to subdue those appetites, which are daily seducing you wide of him. How much more then, as matters stand, Christians, must not you be obliged to embrace a life of crosses and humiliations, to atone for your sins, and subdue your appetites, when your Saviour without any sins to atone for, any unruly appetites to subdue, shews you so glorious an example of the love of sufferings, in his own sacred person? And how can you hope to follow him, how can you shew your desire of it, but by voluntarily denying yourself, and taking up your cross.

And yet, voluntary crosses, humiliations of your own seeking, are the least in value of all those, which your Saviour has set you an example of in his own person, and which you must practice after him, to shew yourselves his grateful worthy disciples. Sufferings of your own seeking, I say, are of the lightest sort; and tho' they are in themselves grateful to God, inasmuch as they are supererogatory sacrifices made to him, yet one mortification or humiliation, borne for Christ's sake from other persons, is worth

worth a hundred of your own chusing. Because the crosses of your own choice, are too often like the fasts of the *Jews* in *Isaiab*, the gratification of your own will, is your only motive. Or if your own will is not your sole motive, it has so great a share in what you do, as greatly to blunt the edge of suffering, and consequently to diminish the merit of it. Whereas those which come to you from *God*, or *MAN*, require a denial of that very will. Now this was not the case with *Christ*, in his above mention'd sufferings. It is true, those sufferings were the effect of his choice; but then his very choice was subject to obedience, in these, and in all the sufferings he went through, from his birth to his death. The evils which any person in this life, may be subject to from other men, by divine permission, must come either from friends, or enemies, or superiors. Now your Saviour, Christians, was resolved to suffer by all, that none of you might find any exceptions, against suffering for his sake all the injuries, all the crosses which any one could load you with. He submitted himself to be circumcised by the high-priest, as his external superior, subjected himself to the rebukes of his Virgin Mother, and even where his life was at stake, submitted to the sentence of the ruling powers. He chose to suffer the cruel mortification, of being betray'd by one of his disciples, denied by another, abandon'd by all, and inwardly tortured, by the sight of his beloved Mother's unspeakable grief. And what cruelty and ignominy he consented to go through from the hands of his enemies, his whole passion and death, are enough to testify, from the garden to *Mount Calvary*. All this too did he undergo, in obedience to his eternal Father, in compliance with whose blessed will, he not only consented to yield up the ghost for our sins, Christians, but even to be abandon'd by him to all the weakness of his human nature, before he did yield it. In short, brethren, to sum up the whole of this important truth in few words, *For us*, says *St. PAUL*, *Christ was made obedient even to death, the very death of the Cross*. And is not this saying enough to convince you, that you cannot be grateful disciples of *Christ* without exerting yourselves for his sake to imitate him in the like obedience to crosses and death when and wherever his honour shall require it? And how will you ever be in such a disposition without first passing a final Judgment of banishment on the world, and casting forth the prince of it from your bosom, by renouncing to the affection towards all and every of it's deceitful allurements. Well then may your divine Saviour tell you, *He who does not renounce to all things which he possesses, cannot be my disciple*.

II. And is there any thing in this condition but

what is extremely reasonable. Your Saviour demands you, Christians, to renounce all things for him. Well, is the demand so grievous? He renounced all for you. Nay, he renounced Heaven, for a time, for your sake; and all he requires of you, in return is, that you renounce the empty allurements of the earth for his sake, and your own. Are you not bound then, by all the sacred ties of gratitude, to make him this little offering? Can you be his disciples, or, even friends to yourselves without doing it? Is not your own Interest absolutely concern'd? Nay, properly speaking, who but yourselves has interest in it?

Christ himself tells you, in the Gospel for this Sunday, that *every-one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. *St. Paul* tells you, in the epistle for the festival, that this way of crosses and humiliation, was the very way which *Christ* himself took to be exalted to his glory, and that by this way alone he attain'd to it. For us *Christ was made obedient to death*, says he, *even the death of the Cross, and therefore God exalted him*. Your Saviour then proposes nothing to you, but what is infinitely to your advantage; nay, nothing but what he has experimented to be so, before he proposed it to you. O the glory and exaltation he calls you to is a part of his own, and that is not to be attain'd to but by crosses and humiliation. He made it inaccessible, even to himself by any other way, and shall his disciples then hope to reach that glory by means denied to their divine master? Ought not *Christ* to have suffer'd these things and so to enter into his glory. If thou, then, lovely Lord of majesty, could'st not ascend to thy own proper glory, till lifted thither by the arms of an ignoble Cross, what chance have we poor wretches of following thee by any other path?

No, no, the servant is not greater than his Lord, nor the disciple more learned than his master. If your master could find no smoother way to glory, no surer way to Heaven, than the cross, in vain you try to find one; by that alone you must expect to follow him thither, and all the steps you take beside that path are false, erroneous, and wide of the mark you aim at. Do you want to follow *Christ* to glory? *He who will come after me*, says *Christ*, *must deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me*. Why so? Because, says your divine Saviour, in my Text, *I, if I be exalted will draw all things to myself*. *Christ* then was exalted on the Cross, on purpose to draw all of you to himself upon the Cross, and that to exalt you afterwards to his glory. Because, *Every-one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*.

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But, what is my Saviour talking of? In one place he tell us, that the way to exaltation is to be humbled first, nay, more, he tells us, that it was necessary for him to suffer crosses and humiliation, and so to be exalted, so to enter into his glory. What can't thou mean then, heavenly Lord, in talking now of being thyself exalted from the earth, in order to draw us all to thee? Is there not something paradoxical in this? Ah, no, Christians, no: 'Tis all divinely of a piece and perfectly consistent. The Holy Evangelist explains to you, what exaltation Christ is speaking of in these mysterious words. *I, says Christ, if I be exalted from the earth will draw all things to myself. This he said,* adds St. JOHN, *signifying what death he should die.* The exaltation then which Christ here speaks of, is the perfection of self-humiliation, the exaltation on a shameful painful Cross. Christ came to exalt himself, and through himself to exalt mankind to everlasting glory, the highest eminence which human nature could attain to. How then was this to be effected, but by the most profound humiliation it could be lower'd to. Accordingly, in being exalted on an ignominious Cross, he stoop'd to the profoundest humiliation of shame and confusion, in order to rise to that summit of glory. And, thus was it that he propos'd to exalt you to the same blessed eminence, by drawing, you first to himself, crucified and humbled on an ignominious tree. Yes, says his Apostle, *Christ suffer'd for us, leaving you an example, that you may follow his steps.* And, in this, what does your Saviour teach you, but to do like a wise and skilful architect, who always sinks the deeper his foundation, in proportion to the superstructure he designs to rear. Would you then be great, says St. *Augustin*, begin by what is least, begin by lowering yourself in proportion to the sacred height of glory you aspire to. Would you be happy with God forever? Crucify your flesh with your vices and concupiscences for a time, for his sake and after his example. Take up your cross and follow him. For, *be that doth not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me,* says God your Saviour. You see then, O, Christians, how much your own interest is concern'd, as well as God's honour, in your embracing a life of crosses and humiliation. You cannot partake in his glory, you cannot be exalted to his kingdom without humbling yourselves. For *every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled,* you cannot humble yourselves, but by suffering your Saviour, exalted on his Cross, to draw you thither after him. If you do that, you will be truly humbled, truly crucified, your exaltation will be the perfection of humility, and your humiliation will exalt you to a perfect solidity of glory. For *if we suffer with Christ,* as St. Paul tells the Romans,

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why is it, but *that we may be also glorified with him.* Upon the whole, beloved, it is plain that you cannot be grateful to God, nor friends to yourselves, without passing the judgment of banishment on the world, without casting forth the prince of the world from your hearts and affections, to give place to the Cross of Christ. For you cannot be his disciples, you cannot be coheirs with him to his glory, without embracing a life of crosses and humiliation, after his example.

But what must these crosses and humiliations consist in, you'll say? Ah, Christians! How can you ask me such a Question, after the plain description your Lord has given you? *Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth,* says Christ, *cannot be my disciple.* The crosses and humiliations then which you are to embrace, are the voluntary renunciation, from your hearts, to all earthly enjoyments, and every affection to them, for his sake. May you not then have any goods, any possessions, any money in reserve? Yes, Christ himself had, and you may have, provided you used them only, not enjoy them, provided your affection to them is subordinate to your duty to God, and you are always in a readiness to part with them, whenever the possession of them is inconsistent with your love to him, or any impediment to your following him. For so doing, you possess them, and not possess them, you are truly poor, with the Evangelic poverty the Apostle speaks of, and possessing all things, strictly speaking, have nothing. But, whatever you possess with attachment, whatever alienates or retards you from following Christ, that You can not possess, that you must renounce for his sake, or cannot be his disciples.

Nor are you, in this sense, to renounce only to the external enjoyments of the world, to the goods of fortune, but even to all the most endearing ties of blood and nature. "If any man cometh to me, says your Saviour, and hateth not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life besides; he cannot be my disciple." But, what my God, has't not thou commanded us to love and honour our parents? Has not thy apostle commanded husbands to love their wives even as thou dost thy church? How then are we to hate them? Can we both love and hate at once? Yes, Christians, a little discretion will teach you to do both, as St. Gregory observes, to love your parents, brethren, consorts, children, and other relations, as friends, and partners in your Christian duty, and yet to hate and shun all commerce with them, which may any ways retard you in your way to God. This you must do, or cannot be disciples of Christ. Nay, with all this, in vain do you call yourselves his followers, if you do not more. You must even hate

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your own Souls, " If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his Cross and follow me, " adds your divine Saviour. But, ah, my Saviour, who can do this? Can this be possible. Yes possible it is, Christians, however difficult. Was it not possible, Christ could not, would not expect it; Was it not difficult. What reward could be due to it? And yet in this lies all the perfection of Christians. In what then, or how are you to hate yourselves. You are to hate yourselves by renouncing to whatever can please you in this life, to love yourselves in every thing which can make you happy in the next. You are to hate your mortal life, for the love of your immortal life. *He who loves his soul sensually shall lose it, and he who hates his soul in this world by mortifying it, shall keep it to life everlasting.* That this will require some struggle, there is no room to doubt. " It is, perhaps, no hard task, says St. Gregory, for a man to give up all his goods, but to give up himself is not a little difficult. "Tis very practicable for him to renounce what he has, but to renounce to what he is *hic Labor, hoc opus.* There all the difficulty lies. "

And yet, beloved, great as the difficulty may seem, it lessens not your obligation. Christ has declared it necessary, he has submitted to it for your sakes, and protests, that unless you submit to it for his sake, you cannot be his disciples. All the sacred ties of gratitude, and all the considerations of interest, then invite you to the embracing this life of crosses and humiliation, after the example of your crucified humble Saviour. For, what rewards may you not expect from him for it? *You, says he, who have done all this, shall receive an hundred fold and shall possess life everlasting.* Ah, Christians, can you then hesitate any longer to take up your cross and follow Christ? You see the rewards before you: Those rewards, which have fill'd so many cloisters with religious, so many deserts with hermits, and the heavens with so many saints; will they not suffice to fill you with a holy ardour, a holy eagerness to be humble, and suffer for him, who will repay you so liberally? Eye but the greatness of the recompence, with steady attention, and you will think the task extremely easy; you will be convinced, with St. Paul, that " the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory which shall be revealed in you. Take courage then, and follow this Apostle's instructions, that, " denying

" impiety and worldly desires, you may live soberly and justly, and godly in this world, " that is, soberly to yourselves, justly to all men, and godly to God. Follow your Saviour's example, who, for the love of you, whereas he was rich, was made poor, lived in continual indigence, and died naked, and exposed on a cross, to draw you to himself, that you by humbling yourselves with him, might be exalted by him.

Keep constantly in view the glorious premium, of your Christian Race, that the infernal enemy, who is ever labouring to rob you of the prize, by decoying you away from it, may never have his malicious ends of you. In struggling with him imitate the champions of the stage, who, before they pretend to the combat, throw off their cloaths, that their antagonist may have less means to grapple with them. " And what, says St. Gregory, are all things on earth but like so many garments of the body." In resisting the Devil then, throw off all your garments of earthly affections, that he may not have power to give you a fall. What do persons do who are to run a race? They abstain for some time, they sweat themselves, lower their weight, and to remove every impediment to winning the goal, throw off their cloaths before they start. And are not you, Christians, running a race of love for a crown of glory. Ought you not then to do, at least, as much. Ought not you to abstain from the desires of the flesh, to sweat it in the works of mortification and mercy, to lower the weight of your pride by humiliation, and to throw off all the garments of earthly affections, which may hinder or retard you. " If every-one, as St. Paul remarks, that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things: And they, indeed, that they may receive a corruptible crown, " how much more ought not you to do it, who are striving for an incorruptible one? Refrain then, beloved, from all that is earthly, take up your cross alone, and follow Christ to the glorious prize you contend for. *And so run that you may obtain.* If you drag your cross, you will take it up in vain, for that itself will retard you. But, if you carry it cheerfully, willingly, and by choice, you will find it light and easy, nay, by humbling you to the true imitation of your crucified Saviour, it will lift you to that substantial glory he came to draw you to. For, as my text says, *every-one who humbleth himself shall be exalted.* And, that this may be your portion, I beg God of his infinit mercy to grant you. *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Seventeenth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MATTHEW xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God from thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first Commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.

THAT you are indispenfably bound, first, and before all things, to love and honour GOD with a sovereign affection and homage, I have already proved to you, in one of my former discourses. And, if I had not, the infinit favours you have received, and daily continue to receive from him, sufficiently speak the greatness of that obligation. To leave you no room, however, to plead ignorance of it, here is a positive precept to enforce it. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God from thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.* And, that you may not imagin it to be a mere occasional law, or such a one as may be broken thro' for any other, your Saviour tells you, that *this is the greatest and the first commandment*, and, consequently, is to take place of all others. And yet, the same divine Lord tells you, that there is another as great as this. The second, says he, is like to this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* But, how can this be, you'll say? If the love of GOD is the greatest commandment, how can the love of your neighbour be as great? The solution is very easy, Christians: The love of GOD is the great end for which you are commanded to love your neighbour. For, the first commandment was not given you for the sake of the second, but the second was given you as a means to enable you to comply with the first. That precept then of the two, which is the end, must necessarily be, in it's nature, the greatest, the first, and take place, in your affections, of the other, which is only a means. And yet, as no end is to be obtain'd without the necessary means conducive to it, whatever obligation you are under of seeking the end, equally obliges you to lay hold on the necessary means by which that end is to be attain'd. Wherefore, tho' the precept of loving GOD be in it's nature greater than that of loving your neighbour, yet both these

commandments are equally great, with regard to the obligation they lay upon you. In this sense it is then that Christ, after telling you that the supreme love of GOD is the greatest and first commandment, adds that, *the second is like to this.* For, says he, *on these two commandments dependeth the law and the prophets.*

Two observations may be drawn from this. The *First* is that, though it is possible for you to have an extraordinary deal of affection for your neighbour, with very little or no love for GOD, yet it is absolutely impossible for you to have any love at all for GOD, without having a great love for your neighbour. The *Second* is that, on one side, ever so great a tenderness for your neighbour, will not enable you to fulfill this second commandment, unless the desire of shewing your love to GOD be the principal motive of that tenderness: And, on the other side, however great a degree of love you may pretend to have for GOD, you cannot fulfill the first commandment, without beginning, in practice, by the second, and proving your love for GOD by your love for your neighbour. Because, as your Saviour tells you, *these two commandments* are the inseparable pillars on which *dependeth the whole* religious edifice of *the law and the prophets.* The consequence of which is, that to fulfill both, you must make use of reason and grace to set about them. What does every reasonable man do before he consents to any one undertaking? *First*, He considers the end he has to propose to himself in doing it, and if the end be eligible he resolves on pursuing it. *Secondly*, he consults the means, and lays hold on those which he finds, upon mature deliberation, to be the most necessary and sufficient. The end then is, the first in intention; and the means are the first in execution. Consult grace then, and ask yourselves, what is and ought to be the chief end of all your actions? Grace will answer you, that it is the love of GOD; that then ought to be the first in your intention in the love you bear to your neighbours, his creatures. And ask your reason, once enlightened by grace, what are the necessary means to attain to that end? And you will find, that it is the love of your neighbour. This, then, must be the first in your practice, even to prove your love of GOD.

Now, the case being thus, as I have already endeavoured to direct your intention to the right end, by shewing you the greatness of your obligation to fulfill the first commandment of loving God with your all, and above all; I shall now proceed to recommend to you the practice of the means by which that end is to be obtain'd, by shewing you,

I. How essentially you are bound to fulfill this other commandment of loving your neighbour sincerely: *And*

II. What the love consists in which you are hereby commanded to practice.

"O, thou dear generous friend of human nature, who for the love of man did'st stoop from heaven to earth, vouchsafe to be our guide as well as law-giver. Recall thy blessed practice to our minds, that keeping sight of thee, we may not be to seek for that fraternal Charity, by which alone we can express our gratitude, and pay thee love for love."

I. To convince you of the greatness of your obligation to love your neighbour, I might content myself with the very words of this precept, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. The words are clear, express, positive, and will admit of no exception. All men therefore, in virtue of the obedience they owe to their sovereign Creator, are indispensably bound, by this precept, to love all mankind as themselves. But what may render this precept so much the more awful, are the frequent occasions which God has taken in the sacred Scriptures to inculcate it. In the *nineteenth* of *Leviticus*, he tells the children of *Israel*, *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart,—But thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. And this is the summary of all the laws the Almighty gave to them, and to us, in the table of the Ten Commandments, which relate to our neighbour. For, as *St. Paul* very wisely tells us, in the *thirteenth* to the *ROMANS*, "Thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; and, if there be any other commandment, it is comprised in this word; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The love of thy neighbour worketh no evil. Love therefore is the fulness of the law." According to *St. Paul* then, the whole accomplishment of the divine law depends upon fraternal charity. This sentiment he repeats in many other passages of his writings. He tells the *Galatians* that, *all the law is fulfilled in one word, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. And, to the *Colossians*, he recommends it above all things, *Above all things have charity*, says he, *which is the band of per-*

fection. Not that *St. Paul*, any more than the divine Law-giver, meant to enforce the love of man as the only duty of man; no, he very beautifully expresses the opposit, by telling you, that this is not perfection itself, *but the band of perfection*, that is, the condition required on our sides towards obtaining of God the grace of perfection, in the accomplishment of the great law of loving God above all things. In short, it is the accomplishment of the practical law, that is the means towards attaining to the intentional law, for which those means were commanded:

Hence it is, that your blessed Redeemer, who came not to break the law but to fulfill it, ratifies this important commandment, in the Gospel for this day, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. And, to imprint it the deeper in the memory of his followers, he omits no opportunity of repeating it. Nay, he, in one place, calls it, by way of excellence, his own precept, as if he meant to intimate, that he came on earth, chiefly to teach the practice of this. *This is my commandment that you love one-another as I have loved you*. And, at his last supper, before parting with his Disciples, he renews it in the strongest terms. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one-another as I have loved you." Ah, loving Lord, where was the novelty of this commandment? Did not thy eternal Father give it to us long before thou did'st vouchsafe to come amongst us; and did'st not thou long before, and often, repeat it? Yes, Christians, he did. And still the commandment was new, in this re-inforcement of it, new in the fresh example he was going to set them of fraternal charity, in his blessed passion, and new, because never to become obsolete and out of date. But O, how new indeed will it not be in your practice, if henceforth you should resolve to fulfill it. For, how many are there here, who pretend to be Christians, who have not yet so much as once endeavoured at the practice of it? And, yet, if you pay the least attention to the stress which Christ every-where lays upon fraternal charity, you must confess yourselves under an indispensable obligation of fulfilling this great commandment, to the utmost of your power, in order to reap any benefit from his redemption of you.

What is very remarkable is, that Christ absolutely insists upon your fulfilling this commandment, as a necessary proof of your fulfilling that of loving him; and declares it to be the essential characteristic of a Christian to love his neighbour. In this, says he, *all men shall know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another*. In vain then do you pretend to be Christians, in vain do you aspire to the great end of Christianity, which is a perfect love for God, if you neglect the means.

means, the necessary condition to attain to it, which is the love of your neighbour.

Nothing will make this truth more evident to you, Christians, than considering the infinite obligations you have to God, for the immense love he has expressed to you. Let us reason upon them then, with St. John. "In this hath the charity of God appeared in us, says the Apostle, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we may live by him." But how can we live by him, without loving and obeying, and following him? "Now this commandment we have from God, says the Saint, that he who loveth God, love also his brother. My dearest then, says he, if God hath so loved us; we also ought to love one-another." Why so? The reason is plain from the Apostle's own words. We cannot be grateful to God who has loved us so much, without loving him in our turns; we cannot love God without loving our neighbour in obedience to him. We cannot then be grateful to God without loving our neighbour. *Let us therefore love God, says this sublime writer, because God hath first loved us.* The love of God then is the effect of our gratitude. "If we love one-another God abideth in us, and his charity in us is perfected." The love of our neighbour then is a necessary argument of our love for God. The consequence therefore, which the divine pen-man draws from this, is, that, "if any man say, that I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he who loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, God, whom he seeth not, how can he love?"

Nay, the Apostle carries the matter yet farther, and proves that, he, who loves not his neighbour, cannot be a child of God, but must be a child of the Devil. "In this are the children of God manifest, and the children of the Devil, says he, every-one that is not just is not of God, nor he that loveth not his brother." And, how does he prove this? Why, very invincibly. "He who keepeth his commandments abideth in God." Now, he cannot be said to keep his commandments, nor, consequently to abide in God, who hateth, or loveth not his brother, because, says the Apostle, "This is the annunciation which you have heard from the beginning, that you love one-another. Not as Cain, who was of the wicked, and killed his brother." Now, every-one who hateth a neighbour is like Cain. "Whosoever, says he, hateth his brother is a murderer. And, you know that no murderer hath life everlasting abiding in himself." Thus, strenuously, does this sacred writer argue in favour of fraternal charity, and so plainly does he prove his assertion, that he who is wanting in fraternal charity cannot be a child of God, but renders himself the child of Sa-

tan, and abideth in death, by becoming, as much as in him lies, a murderer of his fellow-creature, the image of his Creator.

To render the latter part of which more evident, I shall just give you a little notion of the nature of love and hatred; and, to do this, we must consider them abstractedly, as they are, in God himself. The love of God then it was which created you what you are. The extension of his divine goodness to you (while you was, as yet, nothing) it was, which extracted you from that chaos, and gave you an existence. And, if God was totally to withdraw that communication of his goodness from you, that would be the opposite act, which we should call hatred. And such a hatred would sink you again into your primitive state of nothing. Now, the love of creatures, and their hatred are alike finite, and, therefore, incapable of creating, or annihilating. But that is not for want of the good-will. The man who loves an object, invests it in his imagination with all the excellencies he is able to communicate to his ideas of it. Or, the man who hates, or does not love, does all he can, by so doing, to annihilate the person he hates in his thoughts, or affection. And, if God hated the same person, with the same degree of hatred, or loved him no more, the person must become nothing indeed. In not loving your neighbour therefore, if you do not annihilate him in fact, there are no thanks due to you. You mentally murder him, and, therefore, according to the rule your Saviour has set down, *the same measure you measure to him, shall be measured to you again.* God will annihilate you as much as is consistent with the immortal nature he has given you, by banishing you from his divine affections, as you do your neighbour from your love, and you will abide in death, the eternal death of his avenging justice. Of such dreadful consequence is it to hate a brother; and so plain is it, that you are under the greatest, indispensable obligation of fulfilling this second commandment, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, since you cannot fulfill the other of loving God, with your all, and above all, without this.

II. The next question then will be, in what that love must consist which you are to practise to your neighbour. The love then which you are to bear to your fellow-creatures must, in the first place, be an active, fruitful love. To wish to your neighbour, the good he wants, can do him very little service, if you, content with that, slothfully neglect to do all which is in your power towards doing him that good. Good-wishes are a necessary part of brotherly love, but much the least, and very far from being sufficient, where you can do more. Nay, where you can do more than wish, and do

not

not do it, your pretended wishes, your affected good-will is not sincere; 'tis mere dissimulation. When *Lazarus* lay sick of that illness, which was the cause of his first death, his sisters, knowing the love which Christ had for him, and how much it was in this divine person's power to cure him, they sent to him, this short, but expressive message; He Lord, *be whom thou lovest is sick*. They added nothing more, as St. *Augustin* takes notice, to engage him to come. No: All they could add was needful to a real, sincere love like Christ's, it consisted not in bare good-wishes, it wanted nothing but an occasion of doing the beloved object real, effectual good. The occasion offers, and the good is done. Such then, beloved, must your love to your neighbour be, you must extend all the good you wish to your brethren, to the practice of that good, as far as in you lies. Wherefore, says St. *John*, "My little children let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth."

Now, the qualities, with which you ought to accompany the external acts of your love to your neighbour, are beautifully described by St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*. "Charity, says he, is patient, is kind: Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely: Is not puffed up. Is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh not evil, rejoiceth not upon iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: Suffereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, beareth all things. Charity never falleth away." According to St. *Paul* then, to render your love for your neighbour a truly christian charity, you must accompany all the good offices you do him with meekness, and without regard to his inability to make you any returns, you must readily serve and assist him, with patience, waiting for the better rewards, which God has in store for you. You must not envy your neighbour the little advantages you see him possess of, nor deal perversely with him, to rob him of, or embitter this enjoyment of those advantages. Your Charity, if it be real, will not puff you up to any esteem of yourselves preferably to others, but will curb your ambition of soaring above your fellow-creatures; will restrain your sallies of anger, when he either seems to give, or really does give you any affronts, or ill usage; and will lead you always to think the best of him, and to put the best construction on his words and his actions, which they will any ways bear. Your charity, in a word, if it be sincere and effectual, will never suffer you to rejoice in any evil, any mortification, or disappointment, which the worst of your enemies can meet with, but will make you share in the joy of every true advantage or pleasure, which the least of your fellow-creatures may be sensible of. For, 'tis the nature of charity

to suffer all things, for and from a brother, with cheerfulness and patience, to believe all things favourable to him, to hope all things for him which may be beneficial to him, and to bear a part in all his misery as well as happiness, and that with a steady perseverance: For, *charity never falleth away*, nor slackens, by length of time, but grows more vigorous the more it is exercised. Such are the essential properties, beloved, of that affection which God, by this *second* great commandment, obliges you to exert towards your neighbour. Such is the love you require from others to yourself, and, therefore, nothing less will do from you to them. For, this is the will of God, that you *love your neighbours as yourselves*.

However, to carry your fraternal charity to perfection, you must go a step farther, and love one another, even as God has loved you. Now, "in this, says St. *John*, we have known the charity of God, that, he hath yielded his life for us; and we ought to yield our lives for the brethren." To be then in a perfect charity with your neighbours, Christians, you must be in a readiness, of mind and heart, to lay down your lives for them. This your Saviour did for you, and this you must be disposed to do, or you cannot be his disciples, you cannot perfectly fulfill his precept of charity. "This is my precept, says he to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you." Ah! dearest Saviour, if thou did'st shew thy love to us, with such a sweet excess, without regard to any want of merit in us, can it be much for us to shew our love to thee, in loving for thy sake, and in obedience to thee, what thou has't render'd lovely by stamping on it ours, nay more, thy own dear, blessed likeness; and render'd immensely valuable, by thy precious blood? Can we refuse, for love of thee, to yield our lives for our brethren, when thou, for them and us, has't generously yielded first thy own?

To love your neighbour, as Christ has loved you, you must love them without exception of friends, o. strangers, or of enemies, and must love them to the end of life. Tho' your charity should be extended to all mankind, during the major part of life; tho' you should have spent your life, like the charitable *Tobias*, in visiting the imprison'd, in relieving the sick, in burying the dead, and practising hospitality to strangers; though, with *Job*, you should spend the flower of your days, "in instructing many, in strengthening weak hands, in upholding him that was fallen, and in strengthening the knees of the feeble;" still, if, at the end of life, you grow faint, if you suffer your charity to slacken, if you break with one single neighbour, and withdraw your love from him, or retain a mortal grudge to him, all your former charities are nothing.

thing, like a giddy, senseless heifer, which kicks the milk it has plentifully yielded; you render all your brotherly love fruitless, and cannot be said to love your neighbour as Christ loved you, "Who, as St. John tells you, whereas he had loved his "that were in the world, to the end he loved them." It is perseverance then, perseverance alone, which can render your fraternal charity perfect, by likening it to that of Christ.

All that were in the world were given to him, and his that were in the world he loved, not for a time, but to the end of his blessed life, and that without distinction of acquaintance or strangers, friends or enemies. As man, they were all neighbours to him, and, therefore his love was perfectly extended to all. The Centurion, the Canaan, the Samaritan were strangers, and yet they were his neighbours, and, therefore he loved them, but, how did he shew this love? By removing their grievances, flying to their relief, and yielding them spiritual as well as temporal comfort. His blessed mother was his friend, his disciples were his friends, his holy church was his friend, and, how did he express his love to them as such? Why, the first he raised to the highest pitch of glory; the other he instructed in his sacred mysteries, fortified with his grace and love, and made his ministers to spread his faith through the world, giving them the power of miracles to confirm their authority: And, to the last he sent his Holy Spirit, the comforter, the spirit of truth, to guide it into all truth to the end of the world. This, Christians, this is love indeed. But ah, Christians, is your love like this? In what does your love, to your friends consist, beyond a visit, a smile, a treat, or a trivial present, or service, perhaps, with little or no pains or cost to yourselves, and, perhaps, not without the view and expectation of an ample return? Which of your friends, as you call them, do you labour to instruct and improve in piety and heavenly knowledge? Which of them, when they are sick, or become poor or distressed, are you officious to relieve, at the expence of your own ease and conveniences? No: enough it is that their circumstances decay, that they come to stand in need of your assistance, for you to forget your former friendship, shun their company and treat them, with the same coldness and uncharitable indifference, which you have so long practiced towards strangers in want, that you now begin to think it no breach of duty. And yet if you love not the greatest stranger in want, enough to relieve his distress to the utmost of your power, you are not Christ's disciples: For you do not fulfill his precept of loving one-another even as he has loved you. But still you pretend to love all mankind, to be in friendship with all men, and to be desirous of fulfilling this

precept to the utmost of your power. But to convince your-selves whether you do or not, hear what St. John says, "He that shall have the substance "of the world, and shall see his brother have need, "and shall shut his bowels from him, how doth "the charity of God abide in him." Ah Christians, how then can you fulfill this great law, while you see your fellow-creature in any distress, and take no pains to afford him succour? Not at all; says St. Augustin: "He who has no clemency, and "is not possess of bowels of mercy, even to melting into tears at the sight of a suffering neighbour, fulfills not the Law of Christ." How unlike is he in fact to that tender Lord, who could not refrain from tears at the death of Lazarus. But O thou fountain of all joy why did'st thou weep, at the distress which thou camest to remove? No; but at the sight of so many relentless mortals, who could behold in others the miseries themselves were subject to, and behold them with dry eyes and unrelenting heart? Ah, beloved, is not this the deplorable hardness of many here? Suppose I should shew you two poor ancient creatures, once as well to pass as any of you all, now miserably poor, one blind, the other lame, both sick, both hungry, and half-naked, now reduced to beggary, by once renouncing to affluence for the love of Christ and his faith; once courted and caressed as some of you are, now abandon'd by all but vermin which their native cleanness cannot free them from: Suppose I should but tell you one half of what they undergo, I might perhaps offend your delicate stomachs; but should I draw one tear from your un pitying eyes, one sigh from your impenetrable hearts, or one faint wish to succour and relieve them? Who of you all would ask me their abode to pay them one consoling visit? Who of you all would send a little thing to cherish them? Or which of you all would throw in one mite from your superfluous expences towards keeping them from perishing? But why do I say so? No, thanks to the divine grace, you have more charity than this. 'Tis your charity which actually supports them, by your bounty they are fed. And for your prosperity are all their prayers directed. But ah, Christians, what will all this bounty signify, what will all these prayers avail you, if, at the same time, as you part with your money to these you part not with the grudge you retain against any offending brother? For, while you do this, you fulfill not the law of Christ, which is that, you love one-another even as he bath loved you. He not only did good to his friends, and to strangers among you, but even to such of you as were his profest enemies. And all this he did, as St. Peter tells you, "leaving you an example ample that you may follow his steps, who when "he was reviled did not revile, when he suffer'd

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"he threaten'd not, but deliver'd himself up to, and even for him who judged him unjustly." All your charities then, to your friends and to strangers, will avail you nothing, unless you extend your fraternal love, even to such of your neighbours as you think to be your enemies.

Perhaps, Christians, you flatter yourselves, that you do even this. But ah! Heaven grant that it be not mere flattery. For what proofs do you give of your love to them? You'll tell me, that you remember them daily in your prayers. You do well, but if you do no more, alas, you deceive yourselves. Tell me, you who pray for your enemies, do you retain no grudge to them, do you not shun their company, and that more from a dislike to their persons, than from any fear of their hurting you? Are you not even ready to break with such of your friends as will not break with them? Do you not hate to hear them well-spoken of? If you do not hurt, speak ill of them yourselves, do you not feel a secret satisfaction at every slight thing said of them, every disappointment or mortification they meet with? Can you then be disciples of Christ? Can you be said to fulfill his commandment? Can you truly love your neighbour as Christ loved you, who died for you, tho' his enemy, pray'd for you tho' his persecutor, and excuses you to his eternal Father, even while your crimes nail him to a painful, shameful Cross? But they have injured me, you cry, they have done me injustice. Doubtless they have, or you would have nothing to forgive. But, O my Saviour, what justice was it which loaded thee, with such cruel treatment, as thou did'st meet with throughout thy passion? Was it no injury to make thee bleed, on an ignoble tree, between two thieves, as a notorious malefactor, thou, in whom no guile was found? And yet, dear Lord, thou did'st not only forgive them from thy heart, who did thee all this injury and injustice, but did'st even pray for them to thy eternal Father, excuse them, nay, die for them, can you then, Christians, refuse to do as much for those who injure you and yet be Christians? Can you fulfill this great commandment, and love your neighbour as Christ has loved you, without forgiving from

your hearts, your worst, your most, inveterate foes.

Yes, you will tell me, may be, you forgive them from your hearts, and wish them well, and surely that is enough. Surely, there can be no obligation to heap favours on the ungrateful. Ah! Loving, injured Lord, had'st thou thus reason'd, with regard to us, what must have become of us? Thou well did'st know what an ungrateful use we should make of all thy sufferings, death, and graces. And, O, if that had been sufficient to induce thee to confine thy pardon to a negative affection, and unactive love, what could have saved us from the eternal vengeance due to our offences? No, Christ has pardon'd you innumerable injuries, and, so must you forgive your brother, from your hearts, or you cannot fulfill this Commandment.

Had I the time, and you the patience, I could add a thousand other arguments, to prove the greatness of your obligation, to love your neighbour as yourself, and love him as Christ has loved you. But, as I design to treat again upon this subject, in my next discourse, I shall conclude at present only with observing, that, what I have already said, might more than suffice to convince the most refractory of you all, that you cannot fulfill the first duty of loving God above all things, without complying with this second equal obligation of loving your neighbour as yourselves. And to do this, your love must be effectual, active, and extended to all the charity of action, word and wish, which you can practice towards strangers, friends or enemies, without exception. And that not for a time, but to the end of life. So Christ express'd his love for you, and in so doing you must prove your love for him. The love which he requires of you is his due: In that consists the fulfilling of all justice. That is the end for which you are to love your neighbour. And this the necessary means to reach that end. *For on these two Commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.* May God then grant you grace, in this life, to fulfill them, that you may reap the glory promised to such as do so, in the next. Which I beg of his infinite mercy, *In the Name, &c.*

SERMON

S E R M O N

On the Eighteenth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MATTHEW ix. 5, 6, 7.

Whether is it easier to say, thy sins are forgiven thee: Or to say, arise and walk. But that you may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. Then said he to the sick of the palsy, arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house, and he arose and went into his house.

YOUR Saviour then, beloved, had the power and the will to forgive. Here is a signal proof of it. A man is brought to him, for relief, externally loaded with the bodily affliction of a palsy. And who should this be but one whose inward guilt has been the cause of all he suffers? Well then, dear Lord, thou see'st this miserable man before thee, who often has presumed to offend thee, by his sinful life, and still perhaps, would rashly dare to offend thee on, but that thy vengeance overtaking him in this disease, has humbled him to sue to thee for pardon, now his unactive limbs have lost the ease of sinning And can'st thou, wilt thou, injured Jesus, pardon one, who set thee at defiance, as long as he had power so to do? Yes, says your Saviour, *have a good heart, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.* Ah! Lord of mercy, so we hear thee say, and what thou say'st we must believe. But ah, this is not all which is implored of thee? 'Tis easy to pronounce forgiveness. Even, we can say, without much difficulty, I forgive. But who can stifle, or withhold the consequences of resentment? And, without this, what signifies forgiveness? If then, thou meanest more by pardon, than mere outward shew, vouchsafe to make us sensible in what it must consist, and how it must appear. *That you may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,* says Christ, turning to the sick of the palsy, *arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. And he arose and went into his house.* Thus, Christians, thus it was that Christ express'd forgiveness to offenders: He shew'd not his forgiveness in mere empty speeches, but in the stifling of resentment. Those whom he pardon'd, he pardon'd in good earnest, forbore to punish, restored again to all their former marks of his affection, and loaded with fresh favours. And so must you behave, to such as sin against yourselves, if you are his disciples. Think not to excuse yourselves, from this important duty, by pretending that you cannot do it. If you, like

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Christ, your heavenly master, have but the Will, you'll find the practice in your power. For, he was man, and son of man, as well as you; and tho' on this occasion, he call'd his Godhead to his assistance, for the effect of his forgiveness? yet, it was, at last, to prove and make you know, *that the son of man hath power*, as well as the son of God, *to forgive the sins*, committed against himself. In short, this, as well as all the miracles your Saviour wrought throughout his life, was design'd by him a practical lesson to lead you to the perfect love of God, by a compleat charity towards your neighbour. And, therefore, to apply it the more closely, he tells you, soon after. *Go your ways, says he, and learn what it is, I will mercy, and not sacrifice.* Ah! Christians, not all the prayers, the fasts, the sacrifices you can offer to him, will be acceptable, if mercy to one-another is left out. And even this, to be an offering worthy his acceptance, must be extended to all mankind, to friends, to strangers, and to enemies, without exception of one person, without exclusion of one friendly office in your power: This is the solemn truth, which in my last discourse, I labour'd to convince you of. However, then I only reason'd to your understandings: --- Whereas, now I shall endeavour to parley with your hearts, and spirit them up to this essential duty, from principles of gratitude, by dwelling a little on the infinit mercies, which God has shewn to you all, and which you have no other means to be grateful to him for; than by practicing mercy to all mankind for his sake and to the utmost of your power. To do this then, I shall shew you,

I. The great tenderness of affection you ought to bear to your neighbours, as well strangers, as friends, in the immense love which your God has express'd to you: *And*

II. I shall give you a sample of the much, and perfect forgiveness, you ought to practice to your offending neighbours, in the infinit repeated mercies of God in pardoning you.

Whence if your souls, which heaven avert, be not flinted into obduracy; you will be able to see, how easy you may make both these duties to you in the practice, and how dear you ought to make them.

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"But,

"But thou alone, dear Lord, can'st melt the hearts of these my hearers with the important truths I utter. In vain I toil to plant, or sow, thy sacred doctrine, unless thou waterest with thy grace, the soil. O give thou then the increase, and kindly warm the souls of all here present, with that fraternal charity I preach, and by which only they can yield the fruits of thy eternal life."

I. Mankind have no other means of expressing their love and gratitude to God, for the immense love and charity he has shewn to them, than by practising all the acts of mercy and charity in their power towards one-another. However common that proverb may appear, it still is an eternal truth that, *one good turn deserves another*. Every favour then, which God, at any time, bestows on any man, lays him under an indispensable debt of gratitude and equity, to make God all the return he is capable of. And God's eternal justice absolutely requires him to exert his utmost industry to do it. But this he cannot do in coin, if I may use that term; *that is*, man cannot do to God, the good which God has done to him, nor, indeed, any real good. The infinit excellence of the almighty's nature places him infinitely above the reach of human benefits. And yet, the obligation man is under is equally subsisting, and, therefore, with regard to the divine favours he is born, and lives, and must die an insolvent debtor. However, one of the ineffable favours God has bestow'd upon us useless servants is the having, with his grace, which is ever at our call, the power and free-will to do some good: And, therefore, as that good is a real and positive action, it must have a real, and positively passive, object to terminate in. For all the good that is, or can be done, must be communicative, and some must reap the advantage of it. God, as I have observed, is too immensely happy in himself, from all eternity, to reap advantage from the good he requires us to practice, in return for the good he has done us, and, therefore, is it that he mercifully substitutes our neighbours to receive the benefit: That we may have it in our power to repay him thus, the debt we owe him, and reap the benefit of each-other's gratitude to him. This then is the return, which God demands of you for all the infinit good he has done you, that, for his sake, *you love one-another, even as he has loved you*. And this, you see, is the only means you have to prove yourselves grateful to him for that love. And, O my God, how many and great, are not the proofs which thou has't given us of thy ineffable affection!

Thousands, Christians, millions, nay, innumerable and infinit are the benefits your loving Lord

has bestow'd on you. His love is not the love merely of words, but a love of action. In God it is one and the same thing, to wish well and do it. And this love it was, which gave you the being you enjoy, stamp'd on it his own likeness, and enrich'd it with all that might make it a happy creature. He gave you an immortal soul, and endow'd it with, will memory, and understanding; he gave you a body, and assisted it with life, spirits, and sensation; and form'd both to be instrumental to each-other's felicity. In return for this, it is true you cannot create any other beings, like yourselves, that is an action which requires an infinit power, and you are but finit, limited creatures yourselves, and, therefore, that is a return which is not expected from you. But surely, you may make use of the little limited power and faculties you have to contribute, as much as in you lies, to the happiness of those other beings, which God has created along with you, and with the design, that they should be as happy as yourselves. Surely then, your thwarting their happiness, or neglecting any thing in your power to promote it, must be a contradiction to the ineffable design of God in creating you, and them, and but a base, ungrateful use of the being, which God has so graciously given you for that end.

It was the infinity of his love for you, beloved, which induced him to exert his omnipotence, in the production of so many stupendous works of nature. Why did he create the heavens, the earth, the waters, the planets, the fields, the animals, and all that is beneath you, but for your use and delight. Nay, all mankind besides were made for your sake, and you for theirs, that you might enjoy the pleasure and benefits arising from society. All these are the beautiful works of your good God, all these are the kind effects of his almighty love for you. He had no advantage to propose to himself, his Heaven was eternally in himself, and his own divine immensity is sufficient for him and his angels, without any other existence. For your sakes then were all these created. All are the benefactions of that great lord, who, in love with you, chose to express his love by this vast profusion of favours to you; that you overcome by this excess of bounty, might strive to correspond to so much affection, by making a kind of grateful exchange, and rendering, for his sake, all the earthly advantages you receive from him, common to all your fellow-creatures. For, O my God, surely thy immense wisdom and goodness did not create this vast and spacious earth for but a few of us poor, reptil creatures, to strut alone in, and elbow others out of? No, thou design'd'st it for the use of all, that all might socially unite in sharing mutually thy benefits with one-another. And, O how number-

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less are the benefits, beloved, which God bestows upon you all, without distinction, to enable you to answer this great end; many of which are hidden from you, and many unreflected on; not to mention the many and, almost, infinit number of those you are sensible of, and yet have never thank'd him for, nor shewn the least acknowledgement of! What more could your amorous Lord do, to induce you to love him, than he has done? What less could he demand of you, in proof of your love, than to do that good to one-another which he affords you power and means to do, and which he is above receiving himself?

So great is the affection your Almighty Sovereign bears you, that not content with heaping favours on you, as his creatures, he even vouchsafed to stoop his glory to accept of you for friends; and, to cement a strict alliance with you, graciously enter'd into a Covenant of love with you, by which you might partake with him of his eternal bliss. Nay after you had foolishly and basely forfeited his friendship, he sent his only begotten son to re-instate you in it, at the immense expence of his most painful death. O my too loving God, what could'st thou see in us poor, vile, ignoble wretches, so worthy of thy love, that thou could'st stoop thy awful Majesty, and that of thy eternal son, to court our friendship. What pleasure, or what benefit, could'st thou propose from such a mean alliance as that of worms like us? Ah! Christians, God was too happy in himself, from all eternity, before all things were created, to want any thing from you. He generously chose you for his friends, that you might, in return, for so much goodness, be friends to one-another for his sake. *You are my friends,* says your disinterested Lord, *if you do what I command you.* And what does he command you more, as a proof of your corresponding to his friendship, but that, *You love one-another even as he has loved you.*

And how, beloved, how has he loved you as his friends? Why, by assisting and helping you to all which affords you safety, ease, profit, and delight eternal, and even temporal. You-yourself are possess of nothing in, or out of yourselves, that is good, in any sense, but what immediately derives from God. By him it is, you are, and move, and live, and breathe, you can do nothing, say nothing, think nothing, nor wish any thing, but in and by him. 'Tis he that guards you sleeping, and watches with you when awake; that gives success to what you undertake, or comforts you in disappointments. From him alone comes all your means of sustenance, and all the pleasures you enjoy. In short, on all sides he most graciously besieges you with favours to make your obstinate, unyielding hearts melt into love for him.

And all the proofs which he demands is, that you should, for his sake, force on your friends as he has done on you, the little favours you have in your power to bestow, in lieu of his immense ones.

Immense ones indeed, and had they been no more than those I now have mention'd; all the affection you could shew him would be little. But, ah, to how much greater an excess did he not carry his affection? When you had forfeited that bliss for which he made you, he spared no cost to re-instate you in your former right, and prove himself your friend, by the most signal instance which a God could give. To effect this then, he sent his only begotten son to ransom you, that you might live by him. O inimitable goodness of my God! To remedy your evils, he pay'd not down the life of an Angel, a seraphim, or a whole legion of seraphic spirits. No: So well he loved you, O mortals, that he disbursed what was worth more than the united lives of all the choirs of Heaven. He scorn'd to give less than something of his own, nay, something of himself; and that, no less a something than his eternal son, of as immense a value as his Godhead. Him he gave up, without the least interest to himself, and him he exposed to the cruel ignominious death of the cross, for the pure love of you, whom he vouchsafed to look upon as friends. And with what chearful readiness did not this son of God submit to all the sufferings, and humiliation, which savage cruelty could load him with! And all to shew you how much you ought to do for one-another. No man, says this your loving Lord, can have a greater charity for his friends, than he who lays down his life for them. And yet, even here your gracious benefactor could not stop, but, even, went so far, as to leave that precious blood, for a perpetual source of grace, and helps for you. O liberality unbounded! O unexhausted fountain of prodigious love! Ah! Where is the created monarch, who would devote to death his, guiltless, only son, a son; he loved to the utmost extent of tenderness, for mere friendship to his vassals? Where is the prince, who generously would offer to seal a friendship, between a father and his subjects, with his blood? Where is the man, who would consent to part with one cup of his superfluous blood, to quench the thirst of those he loved the most? Yet, this your God and Saviour graciously has done for you and me. Ah! Shall our souls not melt then, Christians, and be dissolved with grateful love for him? Shall God then, after having proved his love for us, by such stupendous charity, only demand of us the slight return of *loving one-another* to the utmost of our power, *even as he has loved us*; and shall we have the power to refuse

fuse him this little proof of gratitude? What tho' we gave up all we have in charity to others; what tho' we gave up all our time, and ease, and liberty, and persons, to acts of mercy, to our neighbours. What tho', in a word, we sacrifice our lives for them; can we do too much to correspond to such a love as GOD has shewn to us? Tho' every single life of ours was worth the lives of all the angels; and every-one of us should sacrifice that life for one single man; yet, would the victim, we should offer, fall infinitely short of the invaluable sacrifice which GOD first made for us. His was the infinit benevolence of a gracious GOD to his unserviceable creatures, ours would be, at last, but a finit acknowledgment to GOD of the infinit debt we owe him.

Alas then, Christians, how can you without trembling think on your deficiency of love for GOD, in return for the infinit love he has express'd for you? You have no means to shew your gratitude to him, but by the love you express to one-another. With what tender affection then ought you not to love and serve your friends, your acquaintance, and all mankind? How eager ought you not to be to serve, assist, and comfort them, to rejoice with them in their innocent pleasures, to condole with, and compassionate them in their sorrows, to relieve them when needy, to visit them when sick, or Imprison'd, to instruct them when ignorant, to counsel them when faulty, to hide and excuse their failings to yourselves and others, to publish their just praise; in a word, to do all the good offices for them, in your power, and to avoid all that in you lies the giving them any just offence. Can you do less than this, for the sake of him who has done so much for you? Every-one of the infinit favours which GOD has bestow'd upon you, is a debt you owe him, and his divine justice demands all the return you can make. Since then, you are incapable of doing him the good he has done to you, and since he has transferr'd his right, in all the advantages of the little good you can do, to your neighbours, as he cannot benefit by it himself, surely, the least you can do, is in love and obedience to him, to do them all the good you can. This he has declared his positive will, this he insists on as the essential proof of your gratitude to him, and this he declares to be the only means you have of shewing that you belong to him. *In this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one-another.*

How then can you, beloved, pretend to be disciples of your loving Saviour; how can you shew your gratitude to your beneficent GOD, if you can see his images, your neighbours whom he has commanded you to love suffering, and not relieve them, naked, and not cloath them. What is your

charity, if you can know of so many of your fellow-creatures in prison, and never set your foot within one to visit them, hear of so many widows and orphans, hungry and buried in ignorance, and put yourselves to no convenience to feed, or instruct them? Will bare good-wishes, think you, suffice to discharge your duty of loving all these as Christ loved you? If he had confined his friendship, for you, to bare inactive wishes, O how much more miserable would you not, must you not be, than the most wretched of those your fellow-creatures, whom you look down on with so much contempt and neglect.

But, perhaps, to your friends, beloved, your own good-nature will incline you to be charitable. As for the rest, you cry, they are none of your acquaintance, you never heard of them before, or, else, they are strangers, they are foreigners, they agree not with you in religion, in politics, or you like not their character. Alas, are their distresses less for that, or are you less bound to love them with the tender bowels of fraternal charity? Ah! No: 'Tis the vain excuse of your own hard hearts. Whatever religion, nation, or personal worth, a person, in distress, be of, he is still your neighbour, still the image and creature of GOD, whether known to you or not. If he is virtuous, you relieve one of GOD's favorites; if he is vicious, you may gain a soul to GOD, and whether it does or does not, by preserving him from perishing, you do no more than what the mercy of GOD sets you an example of, who *causes his sun to shine on the good and on the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust.* All mankind then, good or bad, acquaintance or strangers, are your fellow-creatures, are images of your eternal Benefactor, and they are intitled to all the charitable offices you can render them in gratitude to him. To love your neighbours, with that charity which GOD has express'd to you, you are to love them for his sake, without regard to any amiable qualities in them. For, what amiable qualities did GOD find in you, when first he vouchsafed to love you? It was when you was buried in the dark abyss of nothing, that GOD cast his beneficent eyes upon you; and, what has no being cannot appear lovely, nor draw the affections of any. Nevertheless, in this poor, despicable situation he stoop'd to love you, and, moved to affection for you, drew you from thence, to enrich you with life, and many natural gifts. Still, when you came into the world, what was you in his sight, but a foul vessel of original sin, yet he carried on his affection for you, wash'd you with his precious blood, cloath'd you with his grace, and fed you with his sacred body. Ah, my GOD, what an excess of love was this to strangers, to wretches, to worms, void of all that is lovely, full of

all that is odious in thy sight ! For shame, then, Christians, forbear to talk of strangers, alledge not such frivolous excuses for your scandalous want of charity. None of all your fellow-creatures can be more strange, or have less to recommend them to you, than you to God, before you were created, before you were regenerated : And, ah ! Heaven grant that this be not true, in some sense, with regard to many of you, even now. Alas, too many of you, I fear, were not only estranged from God, from the very wombs of your mother, but are even so now. For, what numbers of Christians may not God complain of, as he did of the Jews, *these people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.* And yet, which of all you, whose hearts are estranged from God, in your criminal pursuits, find his mercy totally estranged from you ? Does he not still protect you, still provide for you, still visit you with his inspirations and calls to repentance ; and, as slow in anger as he is terrible in wrath, does he not still preserve you from dying in the reprobate condition you are in, in hopes of overcoming your obstinacy with goodness ? With what face then can you refuse to practise works of mercy to such of your fellow-creatures as stand in need of your assistance, with the pretext of their being strangers, or wanting any amiable qualities to recommend them to your love ? Know you not, that God has transferr'd, to every-one of your fellow-creatures, his own right in all the advantages of the good you are able to do in return for his love. Can you forget that he has told you, that *what you do to the least of them you do to him.* So impossible then is it for you to be grateful to him, without bearing an unbounded affection to all mankind, strangers as well as friends.

I had almost said, enemies too : And, if I had, I should not have exceeded the truth. The instance I have just given you of God's patience, with such of you as are actually so, is, of itself, sufficient to prove that you cannot love one-another as he has loved you, without practising a sincere and perfect charity, even to the worst of your enemies. But, O my God, is there any need for thee to suffer, any longer, the ingratitude of us sinful wretches, to prove thy excess of love to us, even, when thy basest enemies ? No, Christians was he, for the future, to thunder down his vengeance upon every sinner, in the very instant of his offending him, the many and prodigious instances he has already given of his forgiveness to you, after so often, and grossly insulting him, would be more than sufficient to lay an eternal obligation on you, of practising the nicest charity to your neighbours, let them injure you ever so grievously, and ever so often. It must be own'd,

that God has signalized his love for you, to the utmost excess, in suffering so many affronts and insults as every-one of your sins amount to. Surely, I say, it must be own'd, that his love for you is unlimited, since he could, and would forgive so many base injuries from miserable worms like us. God is not insensible of the heinousness of them, he sees them all, in all their horror, knows how opposit they are to the greatness of his majesty ; he eyes them in the most lively manner, and detests them with the utmost abhorrence. Nor, does he stifle his resentment, as you often do, for want of the power of revenge. No, he could, and can, whenever he pleases, create a thousand hells for any one of you, the very minute you presume to offend him. Instead of which, he has been pleas'd, with ineffable meekness and benevolence, not only to bear with all your ingratitude, but, even to have compassion on you, who have thus basely treated your Chief, your only great benefactor. Ah ! When was there ever known a monarch, who, having it in his power to punish, with the utmost rigour of justice, such of his vassals as had often attempted to betray him, not only forbore punishing them, but even loaded them with fresh proofs of his favour. Yet thus has God acted with you. Ah, how many treacheries and infidelities has he not borne with from you, and yet continued his benevolence to you ! Every mortal sin you have committed, has been a horrible conspiracy against the honour and dignity of your divine Sovereign, and, O how often has he put up with such treasons from you, and not only forbore to inflict on your rashness and baseness, the eternal chastisements due to them, but even heap'd innumerable favours. Ah, Christians, what return then can you make to God, for all this mercy, less than that which he requires of you, of bearing with the lesser injuries you receive from one-another, and returning all the good you can practise, for all the evil you can receive. Let your neighbours load you with all the abuse they can, 'tis still but a finit offence, and, therefore, can never amount to the greatness of the injury you offer to God, in every single, mortal sin, which is an infinit offence, because it is an insult offered to an infinit being, to whom you have infinit obligations.

What say you, Christians ? You are ready to be reconciled to your enemies, if they would but make the first advances towards your forgiving them ? O, my God ! Had'st thou waited till we first were converted to thee, before thou had'st advanced towards us with thy converting mercy, how should we ever have attain'd to forgiveness ? No, God sees the inflexibility of your hearts in sin, and how little disposed you are of yourselves to treat with him on a reconciliation, and, therefore, graciously

graciously sends you his invitations to repentance, as if he stood in need of your friendship; whereas, he was eternally happy before you were created, and would be equally so if you should all perish. Can you then, O stubborn mortals, refuse to melt into mercy at the sight of so much generosity? Can you refuse to make the first advances towards a reconciliation with such of your equals, by nature, as have offended you, when your God can stoop to make the first advances towards a reconciliation with you, who are his creatures infinitely beneath him, and have infinitely offended him?

You have no other means than these to shew your gratitude to God, for such infinite generosity, nor to pay the debt it lays you under. And, how immensely great is not his goodness in putting it thus in your power to discharge so infinit a debt? Alas, though the enmity of your neighbours should level at all your substance, your peace, your reputation, your life, and all that is dear to you, it would still fall short of your enmity to God, in one mortal sin. Every mortal sin of yours cost no less than the death of his divine Son. O, how patient and forgiving would you not think an earthly sovereign, who should not be tired with pardoning a treacherous subject, who, after being loaded with all the favours he could heap upon him, had cruelly murder'd ten of his children. And yet, how much greater is not the patience and forgiveness which God has shewn to you, in forgiving you, after having murdered not ten, but, perhaps, hundreds and hundreds of times, his divine, his only, his dearly beloved Son, by the mortal sins you have committed against his commandments, every-one of which was, in it's nature, a fresh crucifixion of JESUS CHRIST, who died on a shameful, painful cross, for every sin, in particular, which you have committed! This is a patience, a forgiveness which could find room only in the heart of a God infinitely in love with us. And, how much greater does not his affection to us appear in this than to the angels. In them he would not even put up with the first offence, but condemned whole millions of legions of them to eternal misery, for one single insult, and yet, not only patiently endures with thousands of insults from every-one of us, but even continues his benevolence to us, and courts us to renew a strict friendship with him, by the most endearing invitations. O, my God, what return shall we make thee for all this immensity of love?

What say'st thou, gracious Lord? *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you.* Yes, my heavenly Lord, I hear thee, but what is this to the infinit obligations we owe to thee? They have offended us but finitely, and we have infinitely offended thee. What

then can our forgiveness to them be in comparison of thine to us? Thou art the infinit Being to whom we owe the utmost charity we are capable of, and how, alas, can they supply thy place? No matter, such is my heavenly, gracious condescension, says God, to substitute them to receive the effects of your charity. And, therefore, *what you do to one of the least of mine you have done to me.* O, what unparallel'd goodness, Christians, does not God display in this all-gracious condescension. Thus does he afford you the means to discharge yourselves of this great debt you owe to him. He has exerted all the infinity of his wisdom, power, and goodness, to do you good in quality of his friends. Nay, ere you could be so, while you were strangers to him, buried in the dark abyss of nothing, he carried his affection to the drawing you from thence, raising you to the power of being his friends, and courted you to it by all the benefactions which a God, so merciful, could load you with. O, who but God would not have stopped his hand after the abuse of so many favours? But, he, as if he had been insensible of all your baseness to him, or, as if he had been pleased with being insulted, has still return'd all your baseness with fresh proofs of unutterable love, spared no expence, not even the death, the cruel, shameful death, of his divine beloved, only begotten Son, to reinstate you in your right to that eternal bliss, for which he made you, and of which you proved yourselves so undeserving. And all this, only to overcome your vileness with his bounty, and make you happy against your inclinations. And shall he not then succeed, Christians, after all this excess of love? Shall it be said, that he, who has loved you to such a sweet extreme, shall ask no other return of you than, that, for his sake, *you love one-another*, to the utmost of your power, *even as he has loved you*, and, yet, be refused? Shall he have done so much for you, when strangers to him, nay, when odious to him, and you refuse a charitable tenderness to strangers in distress, shall he have loved and treated you as friends, and you not treat your neighbours as such, or love your friends with a mere outside shew? Shall he have pardon'd you such infinit offences, nay, added to his pardon such ineffable effects of mercy, and you continue your resentment to your neighbours for every slight offence. If revenge appears so sweet to you, beloved, forget not that you are creatures, and ought to give the preference to God. He has not yet revenged the blood of his eternal Son: And, till he does, your vengeance must be out of time. What shall worms, like you, take place of God. No, while he forgives, you must: And, not in bare expression, but, like him, in fact. 'Tis easy to pretend forgiveness: But *which is easier*, as my

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text says, to say to your neighbour, *your sins are forgiven you*, as far as relates to me, or to shew you are in earnest, by withdrawing the effects of your resentment, and reinstating him in your favour by fresh benefits? 'Twas thus your Saviour, in this gospel, gave proofs of his forgiveness, and thus must you confirm your own. This is the only means you have to make a grateful return to God for all the love he has shewn to you. This he expressly requires of you, that *you love one-an-*

other even as he has loved you. And, by this love alone, he tells you, that *all men shall know you are his disciples.* If you are not his disciples in vain he has redeem'd you; and, if you are, by *loving one-another as he loved you*, you will reap the benefit of being such, which is to *live by him*; for to this end alone did he come into the world, says St. John, that you *might live by him*, a life of grace on earth, and a life of eternal glory in Heaven. Which, &c. *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Nineteenth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MATTHEW xxii. 14.

Many are call'd but few are chosen.

WHEN the eternal King of Heaven, out of his superabundant goodness to the creatures of his own making, was graciously pleased to wed his divine Son Jesus, by giving him the Holy Church for his immaculate spouse; his intention was that all mankind might reap the benefit, and partake in the joy of those ineffable nuptials. To the *Jews*, however, it was that he sent his first and special invitations, they being then his distinguish'd favorites. But, alas! They were befuddled enough to neglect the profer'd blessing, hurried away, some by interest, some by pleasure, all by the darling objects of their different, unruly appetites. It was then, O Christians, that the divine Majesty, loth to leave his favours uncommunicated, sent out his servants into the streets, into the highways, to gather you from among the different nations, to partake of the riches of his goodness. But, ah, how illy do you correspond to such an excess of bounty! How many of you remain as insensible to the divine favour as the *Jews*! How few of you fall short of them in neglect! What numbers exceed them in ingratitude! Where is the Christian, who does not make worldly interest the measure of his religious practise? Where is the Catholic who compels pleasure to give place to duty? Have you not every-one your stage of business, your place of pleasure, your prospect of applause, to divert you from listening to the voice of God, who invites you to be his guest? In a word, *How many are called, and how few are chosen!* For your part, Christians, you are all of you call'd. But are you all of the number chosen? You are all welcome guests, you are all invited by God to the ban-

quet of his glory. But have you all the nuptial vest of his grace? Alas, would you could with any truth say, yes. To what then, shall I impute your neglect of so material a point, or what arguments shall I use to convince you of the greatness of your oversight? To set you right, Christians, all I can say is, that you will have no one to blame but yourselves, if you are not elected into the state of glory to which you are call'd. And this I shall endeavour to convince you of;

- I. By pointing out the general causes of reprobation in many of those who are call'd.
- II. By shewing, that all being call'd to be chosen, every-one has his election in his own reach: *And*
- III. By considering the necessary consequences flowing from these truths, and the reflections they ought to raise in us.

"O thou dear generous Lord, who has't prepared the banquet of thy glory for us, be not content to call us kindly to it; but mercifully send thy efficacious grace, which may sweetly draw us all to accept thy liberal invitation, and cloath us with the nuptial garment of thy love that we may be elect as well as call'd."

I. There are few, very few, who can plead involuntary ignorance as any tolerable excuse, even to men, for the excesses they give into against the laws of God and his Church. And none, no not one can alledge it to God, but infants and idiots. All others have knowledge enough given them, to lead them to eternal felicity; and, therefore, is it that they are culpable in swerving from it: For, as St. James says, *to him, who knoweth good and doth it not, to him is the sin.* Had the divine Creator left

left man in an absolute ignorance of good or evil, and a total stranger to the future happiness resulting from the one, as well as to the subsequent misery flowing from the other, the choice of either would have been an indifferent action, incapable, in itself, of praise or blame. But, such is the infinit goodness of the Almighty, that he *enlightens all men coming into this world*, sufficiently to work their salvation. There is no one so ignorant as not to know good from evil, and the inviting, or terrifying consequence of his good or bad choice. Every man knows the certainty of misery, and the precariousness of happiness in this life. And without the help of any higher lights than those of nature, all nations, all degrees of men, are unanimous in the belief (not to call it conviction) of a future more solid, certain felicity. Nay, however, they may vary in their ideas of that felicity, yet all agree, that the practice of every virtue is the only means to attain to it. And, that yearning after felicity which GOD has so strongly ingrafted in every human breast, is sufficient to make every-one earnestly desirous of happiness beyond death.

Why then do we see so few, who pursue that happiness in earnest? Why do so many take the measures, diametrically opposite to the avow'd means, by which alone that felicity can be obtained? The reason is obvious. Mankind are hurried away from their happiness, by the misapplication of those passions, which were given them to animate them in the right pursuit of it. In short, passion led on by precipitancy, has brought human nature to such a pass, that there is very little difference to be made between age and infancy, if you except years and guilt. The greatest part of men are but full-grown children, who act by starts, and think by appearances. The difference between their infancy, their youth, and their manhood is, that their passions grow stronger, their reason weaker, and their guilt heavier, and more unpardonable, as the consequence is more fatal. But in every stage alike, they are determin'd by the outsides of things, because too indolent to penetrate farther; and, unaccustom'd to carry their imagination beyond the present, the future affects them but little, if at all. A young child will prefer a brass counter before him, to the future possession of a golden medal: And a youth, in his minority, will sometimes give up his right to a plentiful estate, for a trifling sum to gratify a present appetite with. Yet, these are rules which will admit of many exceptions, as we know by experience. But, how few exceptions are to be found of men, who will not give up the treasures of GOD's glory to pursue a trifling lucre in view! For one, whom we may except, how many millions are there who, knowingly and willingly give up the future, solid joys of Heaven in exchange

for a trivial, empty, fleeting, present pleasure, which must cost them, without comparison, more pains and uneasiness to possess, than it required to renounce it.

Pleasure profit and applause, are the three great motives, to which GOD has confined all our pursuits: And these, rightly applied, are sufficient to guide all men to salvation. But, how generally, alas, are they misapplied! If pleasure be your pursuit, Christians, who of you all need want a motive to follow the call of GOD to his service, when promised a share of such exquisite delight, *as eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man?* But, alas, this pleasure, great as it is believed, great as it really is, you eye a far off, you look upon as future; and, therefore, impatient of more speedy enjoyment, you are deaf to GOD when he calls you to it. A present lust, a sudden revenge, and actual luxury, have more prevalent charms, and you give them the preference. Why, O lecher, do you persist in that criminal enjoyment, which you are uncertain of possessing, when a more solid fruition is proffered you for eternity? Why, O implacable wretch, do you pursue resentment, when invited back to a more noble triumph, by the avenger of all wrongs? Why, O glutton, will you pamper your depraved appetite, in defiance of the laws of GOD and his Church, when your temperance would be so substantially requited at the banquet of his eternal love. Ah! The cause is but too plain, the present pleasure stands between you and eternity. GOD calls you to the pleasures he created you for: But every-one of you has form'd a pleasure of his own to himself, and GOD may call to eternity, you will never listen to him.

Why does that miser place his happiness in usury? Why does this other tradesmen delight in unjust gain, impose on his dealers, and defraud his creditors, contrary to the known laws of GOD, and the dictates of his own conscience? and, why do you, O heartless Christians, resist the known truth, impugn it, delay embracing it, or blush to defend it, where your worldly interest is at stake? Is it that you are insensible of the infinit treasures hoarded up for such as renounce the world and its interests, to answer the call of Christ? Or, is it, that you are not desirous of them? No, neither is true. You both know the rewards, and yearn after them. But present interest presents itself to your captivated view, in the most amiable light; you have not the patience to wait for the future. And GOD may call on, you are still deaf to his voice.

How few ambitious men would there be; how small would be the number of those, who, at the expence of virtue, of peace, and of life itself, are in perpetual pursuit, of power, dignity, and splendour;

dor; how very small, I say, would be their number, but, for the empty applause and homages of a flattering world! But, are there not greater degrees of applause promised by God to such as renounce all these for Christ's sake, and to answer his call to glory? Yes, ah yes! They who renounce the applause of men, will be applauded by God himself in the presence of the whole world. They who have courage enough to assert Christ before men, without fear of their ridicule, or disapprobation, will, one day, be commended by him the presence of men, angels, and God himself. That man, who dares be chaste, amidst the sneers of a lewd company, dares be honest amidst the scoffs of knaves, and sober in spite of the mockery of drunkards, shall, instead of the false applause he had the heart to despise, receive the solid praise of his just God, in the face of the universe. Is not the exchange then worth waiting? yes; but ah, Christians, such is your impatience and precipitance, that they suffer you not to weigh the future with the present. Applause is what you covet; the present is before you, and the future you will not cast an eye towards; therefore are you so grossly cheated out of your eternal felicity. Therefore, in a word, is it that none of you have ears when God invites you to his glory: Because one has tuned his senses to the immediate voice of pleasure, another to the invitation of actual interest, and a third to the magic sound of present flattery. To express it in the words of the gospel, one has his farm or rural entertainments to attend to, another his traffic, and worldly commerce, another his wife, or something worse.

There are, indeed, a kind of Christians, who ought to be excepted from those we have been talking of. To speak truth, the pleasure, profit, or applause of the world, have very little share in their motives of acting. But then, they are full as indifferent to those of Heaven. It is not that they do not desire, and desire earnestly to be happy with God and his angels: But then their desires, however earnest, are ineffectual. They know, that *the kingdom of heaven suffers violence*, and therefore habituated to indolence, they chuse rather to risk a perpetual exclusion from it, than to be at the pains of violenting themselves in any thing. And tho' the nuptial vest of God's grace be sufficient to qualify them, to partake of the banquet of his glory, they will rather hazard a shameful repulse, than be at the pains of acquiring and preserving it. In short, they slothfully suffer themselves to sink into the number of the reprov'd, rather than be at the trouble, as they think it, of stretching forth their hand to lay hold of the election to bliss, which courts their acceptance. This naturally leads me to shew you,

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Secondly, That all mankind being call'd by God with the intent that they might be chosen to his glory, every-one has his own election, within his own reach.

That God created all mankind, to enjoy eternal felicity with him, is too universally acknowledged, to stand in need, at present, of any support. To whom then can it be owing, that they are not all as happy as he design'd them to be? It must be absurd to imagin that God would act any thing destructive of his own divine purpose. And if he created them to be happy, he must give them the means to be so: Since it is beneath his infinit wisdom to desire them to be, what they had not the power of being. If then man was provided with all the means, requisite to attain to eternal felicity, is it not his own fault that he neglects those means, and in so doing forfeits the bliss he was design'd for? It is true, indeed, that man was no sooner invested with the right to eternal glory, than he forfeited that glory, and the very means to recover his original right. And yet, God was so far from taking advantage of the fall of man, to exclude the whole race from the bliss he had given them a right to, in virtue of his promise; that he sent his only begotten son to re-instate them in their abilities, and restore them, at the immense price of his precious blood, to the means of salvation, which they had lost. None were excepted from this act of grace: It is universal, and take in all who will benefit by it. *Come to me*, says Christ, *all you who labour and are heavy laden I will refresh you*. They who have grace are invited to receive the means, to preserve and augment it; they who have none, that is, they who are oppress'd with sin, and labour under the load of guilt, are invited to disburden themselves, at Christ's feet, and to receive the refreshment of his grace. All, all are invited. The worthy, and the unworthy alike are call'd: Or, rather, none are unworthy with him of being chosen, but such as are unwilling to be so.

Come to me all, says Christ: All then are invited. It is true, he compels none, that they who accept his invitation may have the merit of doing it. God created man a free agent, and left in his power the choice of happiness or misery, that chusing the bliss, design'd for him, he might possess it in the most perfect manner his being was capable of, by possessing it in his own right, in virtue of God's unalterable promise. It would have been then inconsistent, with his ineffable goodness, to divest him of that which he created him for, by violenting his free-will. And ah, my God! Who would think, that man could be so much his own enemy, to stand in need of any force to be made eternally happy!

R

God,

GOD, it is plain, O mortals, is better acquainted with you, than you with yourselves. and, therefore, though he does not force your will, he afforded you grace, lights, and means, sufficient to bias that free-will to the choice of your own happiness. If then you slight that grace, if you neglect those lights, if you abuse those means, shall GOD be reputed unjust for not forcing you? *What could I do to my vine, says GOD, and have not done it?*

It will, perhaps, be objected, that a man, who is in a state of mortal sin, cannot be released from it but by GOD's grace. True: Yet, how came he to fall into that state, but by abusing the grace, and neglecting the lights first given him. GOD *illuminates all men coming into this world*, with sufficient light for their present exigence, if they make a right use of that light, he augments it, and adds light to light, in proportion to their improvement of it, till they reach to that perfect grace requisite to eternal salvation. And such, as never reach to that grace, are they, who have abused the first lights given them, and thereby forfeited any farther ones. And, yet, no one is so void of grace, but he may have it for asking: And, surely, 'tis a very trivial favour which is not worth a petition. *Ask and ye shall have, says Christ, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be open'd to you.* You need then but ask, and have. Does not GOD, in the solemnest manner, protest *that he will not the death of a sinner*. No: He desires that *you should be converted and be saved*. Is not your life then left at your own option? *What does GOD require of you, says the prophet, but that you love him?* Is this so arduous a task? You may say you cannot fast, you cannot give alms, you cannot kneel long: It may be true, for ought I can gainsay. But can you, O Christians, with any truth say, I cannot love what is infinitely lovely? And, yet, this is all you are asked. This is that perfect charity, that grace, that nuptial garment, which intitles you to sit at the banquet of GOD's glory. Is it not plain then to a demonstration, O, beloved Christians, that your election is within your own reach? Let us, therefore, in passing, cast an eye on the important consequences to be drawn from these truths, which will make the third consideration, proposed in this discourse, and introduce my conclusion.

III. From what has been said, we must necessarily infer, that the work of our salvation absolutely depends upon our concurrence with the divine grace. And since that grace is given to all, who ask it, none can plead a legitimate excuse for the want of it. If, therefore, we should be damn'd, Christians, we shall have this melancholy circumstance to aggravate our misery, that our sufferings

will be unpitied. It is some alleviation, to a wretch, in the midst of the greatest evils, when he is conscious of not having drawn them upon himself. But, the wretched objects of GOD's wrath will have no room for this solitary comfort. No, their sufferings will be sharpen'd by the sting of their conscience, which will perpetually remind them, that they themselves were the voluntary authors of their own irreparable misery. And, what will swell the sum of their despair will be the hateful, yet, ever present comparison of the infinit substantial bliss they have lost, with the empty trifles they exchanged it for. What rage must not possess them, when they eye, with one thought, the solid felicity of the blessed, and the uncertain, fleeting, empty joys, for which they consented to renounce it! How can they, without despair, compare the treasures of Heaven with the false lucre they accepted in exchange for them? And, can they be witnesses to the praises which GOD will give to his servants, for having prefer'd his love to all human respects, and remain in a state of tranquillity? No. The invitation of Christ to his elect: *Come ye blessed of my Father*, will throw them into an agony of envy and despair, which can scarce be augmented by the horrid sentence pronounced against themselves: *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire*. How besotted then is every mortal who will run so dreadful a risk, when in his power to avoid it. How strangely infatuated must he be to renounce thus an eternity of happiness, and embrace an eternity of wretchedness, for the sake of any pleasure, profit, or applause, this world can afford him! Especially when we consider, that the highest happiness we can propose to ourselves, in this life, never answers the ideas we conceive of it; but is ever uncertain in it's pursuit, momentary in its duration, empty in it's possession, and almost ever drown'd in the anxieties, fatigues, and perplexing circumstances which surround it. And yet, how general a folly is this among men; I may say, among Christians; and what is more melancholy, but not less true, it is so, even among catholics. What wonder then, that of the many who are called so few are chosen.

I cannot help taking notice here of something very remarkable in the conclusion of this day's gospel. It appears from the very account of the sacred text, that of all the guests, who were present at the royal banquet, there was but one, only one excluded from it, for want of a nuptial garment. Where then was the room for this extraordinary, this surprising reflection: *Many are called but few are chosen?* Ah, 'tis GOD, it is Christ who speaks, to whom one single soul is worth a thousand worlds. Such is the infinity of GOD's goodness to man, that he looks upon the millions of his elect, as small gain in comparison with the loss of one soul.

What

What value then, O Christian, ought not you to set upon that soul? GOD has millions in his possession, and can, to eternity, create as many more as he pleases: You have but one soul to lose or save, and that lost you cannot redeem nor compensate with another. He can really suffer no loss, were all the souls he created to be destroy'd; you, if you lose your own soul, lose your all, and must be eternally sensible of it. Learn then, from the high value which GOD's disinterested bounty sets upon you, to prize yourselves, henceforth, more than you hitherto have done. Place nothing in competition with your salvation. *What will it avail a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of*

his own soul, which ten thousand worlds cannot ransom. Work your salvation in fear and trembling, and, since many are called and few are chosen, make it the business of your life to procure that nuptial garment, of grace and charity, which you have in your reach, that you may be, of the happy few, elected to that substantial banquet of glory and felicity, which satiates, but never gluts, which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor tongue uttered, nor hath it enter'd into the heart of man to conceive; and, which nothing can give a perfect idea of, but that peaceful, eternal possession, which I heartily wish you, and beg GOD, in his infinite mercy, to grant you: *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Twentieth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. JOHN iv. 46, &c.

A certain Lord, whose son was sick at Capbarnaum, coming to Christ in Cana of Galilee, say'th to him: Lord come down before that my son die. JESUS, therefore, say'th to him: Go, thy son liveth. Accordingly this Lord going back to Capbarnaum, and finding that the fever had left his son, in the same hour in which JESUS say'd to him, Thy son liveth, himself believed and his whole house.

O My GOD, that my voice was but, at present, audible as the rattling peals of the jarring clouds, to ring, like thunder, in the ears of the drowsy people of this nation, and force them to tremble for their safety! O, that my words were subtle as lightning, to penetrate to the very souls of these, at least, who hear me; that they might at length, be prevailed upon, for once, to look round them! And when, O Christians, was there need of putting you upon your guard, if there be not now, when death is rapping at every door, when the numbers of families, in this kingdom, may almost be number'd by the burials they have furnished, and when, for little the present reigning pestilence augments, there will be reason to expect every street, in this populous city, to be once more covered with grass, for want of feet to tread it down? But ah, what hopes can I entertain, that a feeble voice like mine, that accents, void of every grace, stripp'd of every eloquence, shall affect you, when the eloquent, pathetic sound of a passing bell, tolling almost incessantly, in every steeple, has nei-

ther the force to awake you from sleep, nor to make you reflect when broad-awake. Tell me, dear auditors! What street can you traverse without hearing of somebody just dead or dying: And yet, which of you reflects how soon you may become the subject of a like conversation? What corner can you turn without encountering a funeral: And yet, which of you all is startled by a thought on your own? What family can you visit scarce, without missing a friend or acquaintance; still which of you reflects, that you may be the next person miss'd, when your visit should be return'd? So very familiar are you grown with death, and so very little are you prepared for his approaches! You can follow, nay, elbow him to the very graves of others, without once preparing to face him, when he shall beckon you to your own. O, what a strange inconsideracy, to be so little alarm'd amidst so much danger; to use so little precaution in such a time of sickness! However, mistake me not, Christians, I do not doubt but you are cautious enough for your bodily health. I don't question your recurring to your physicians for antidotes. But, ah! which of you has yet seriously had recourse to that sovereign Being, without whose direction your physician will prove your most fatal disease?

Three things I observe, in the conduct of the nobleman in our Gospel: His behaviour before the approaches of sickness, his deportment in time of sickness, and his manner of acting after it. In the two first, O Christians, how many of you are like him! But, alas, how few resemble him in the last!

'Till sickness paid a visit to his family, he paid no visit to Christ: No; it was the sickness of his son, which put him in mind of having recourse to God. *A certain lord, says our gospel, whose son was sick at Capernaum came to Christ.* Ah, dearest auditors! Such is the conduct, in general, of you all. While your health is good, while your spirits are free. No God, no Heaven, can find entrance into your thoughts. Your pleasures, your interests, your wordly attachments, take up too much room in your breasts, to afford God a place there. He must lay his hand heavy upon you, before you will vouchsafe to think seriously on him; and, if he is absolutely bent on fixing his abode in you; he must force his way to your hearts by a fever, an inflammation, or some other disorder. Then, then it is, if ever that you think of returning to him. But, ah, how loth are you, not oftentimes, to do it, even then! How froward was our nobleman in recurring to Christ, 'till death drew the curtain, and shook hands with his child, this sovereign remedy was neglected. Then, and not till then, it was that he vouchsafed to apply to superior help. *Lord, come down before that my son die.* O, Christians, how like are you all to this dilatory nobleman? How often, and, yet to how little purpose do we exhort you, beseech you, conjure you, to send for us priests to reconcile you to God, in the commencement of your illness. But, no; till death has too much terrified you out of tranquillity, for us to be of any great service to you, our visits are rather importune than pleasing. O strange neglect! Which, miracles aside, must render all after diligence abortive. Here, however, was a miracle, dilatory as our nobleman had been, he obtained from Christ not only the eternal, but the temporal cure of his indisposed son. And, happily for him, he return'd the divine favour with a grateful adherence to Christ. *And himself believed and his whole house.* O, that as much could be said of every-one of you! Look back, O Christians, on the dangerous sicknesses with which God has visited you, in one time or other of life, and yet, mercifully, by some miracle, not less a miracle for being hidden to you, restored you from the arms of death. And then reflect, how have you fulfilled the good purposes you made when sick? What thanks did you return him, when recovered. And, with what gratitude have you behaved to him ever since? You can then make an ill use of health, and yet cannot make a good one of present or past sickness. O, dreadful perversity! Is here no bringing you off from it, Christians? Yes, by the grace of God, I hope to do it, with some of you, at least, in this discourse, by convincing you of two things:

I. How you ought to behave, as Christians, before sickness, in it, and after it: *And*

II. Of what infinit importance it is for you to behave rightly in all these circumstances.

"O, my God, let not one syllable of this discourse be lost, but give my hearers grace to mind it, and may they mind it, not to their condemnation, but to a fruitful practice."

I. It is beneath the dignity of the Divine Majesty, to create an intelligent Being like ours, for the eternal possession of himself, and yet to keep it from that possession, during a number of years, in this mortal state, barely for the sake of letting it breathe a while in a state of vicissitude, of health, and sickness, and bustle for a support. No, God must certainly have some nobler end, in placing us in this mortal state, than just that we might bustle to live, and live only to die at last. The great motive of our creation, you know, Christians, was that we might enjoy eternal felicity, and enjoy it as our own, by making it, through God's free grace and promises, our personal acquisition. It was highly consistent therefore, with his infinit wisdom for God, to place us, after the fall, in this variable state of mortal life, that by making a right use of the vicissitudes of weaken'd nature, we might repair our loss, and acquire the virtues requisite to qualify us for the bliss design'd us. For as there are two kinds of virtue, the one passive as it were, and of a feebler nature, such as *Meekness, Patience, Resignation*, and the like; the other active, robust, and vigilant, as *Faith, Hope, Fortitude*, and many more, but above all that, true excelling *Charity*, which extends to all the works of mercy, and of justice; man could not well acquire them both, without being subject to the various states of health, and sickness, ease, and pain.

Sickness, consider'd in a natural light only, is a natural evil, inasmuch as it is opposit to health, and ease, which the appetite considers and covets as natural goods; but if it be eyed in a moral light, as affording us the opportunity of acquiring the habits of patience, resignation, and the like, it often will prove to be, and might always be, if we applied it rightly, a moral good. *Health* on the contrary, is in itself a natural good; but considering it morally, according to the too frequent ill use it is made of, it is in general, through our own perversity, a moral evil. And yet is it in itself, and in the intention of the divine donor, a moral good, as well as a natural one; because it affords us the opportunity of practising those virtues, which are not so easily put in execution, in time of infirmity. *Patience, Meekness, Resignation*, and other passive virtues, as they require not an extraordinary share of spirits, may be practised without much difficulty, in a very infirm state. Nay, as their objects are natural evils, that state

seems the most proper for acquiring the habit of these virtues. But the robuster virtues being in their very nature, of an active disposition, require a considerable strength of mind and vigour of heart, as well as a large portion of spirits in a man, to acquire the habits of them, and therefore health must be the state, in which he is to labour for the acquisition of those habits. Tho' then, as habits create ease; a man who has acquired the habits of the robuster virtues, may, and will without difficulty, practice them even in sickness, sickness is not the state for acquiring them, but health. The great end therefore, for which God gives you health, Christians, is that you may employ it in arming yourselves with the habits of those virtues, which are not to be obtain'd in a state of infirmity. And consequently as you can never be certain, how soon infirmity may overtake you, you cannot answer the divine intentions, without making use of every hour of health, in the study of those virtues, lest you should find the want of them, when too late, to supply that want.

Thus far then it appears, that health in itself is not a natural, but a moral good, and a considerable one too, if we please to make it such: Consequently desirable. Eating and drinking then, with all those innocent exercises and diversions, which are necessary to preserve health, are not only lawful, but commendable, provided the Christian use of that health be the chief motive of using them. But, O how horrible an inversion is it not for a rational creature, much more a Christian, to hug health, merely for the sake of eating, and drinking, and idle occupations, and sollicitude! This is a sentiment more becoming brutes than rational creatures, and capable only of perverting health into a real evil, not only moral, but natural, inasmuch as it not only depraves the appetite, but hebetates and stupifies the very understanding.

The only way then, Christians, to make health a good, as God intends to you, is to make the support and preservation of it, only the means, and to consider the virtuous use of that health, as the only end for which God gives it you. In health, your apprehension is quick, your judgment solid, your memory ready, your spirits flow freely, and your limbs are in readiness to move at your beckon. When therefore, can you so properly apply yourselves to the study of the divine laws, as in such a freedom of thought, of will, and of action. How diligently then ought you not to employ every moment in this state, to raise your minds to God, with a lively faith in his sacred mysteries, to fix your hearts on him with unshaken confidence, in his never failing goodness, and to live such unblemish'd lives, as may render your confidence not presumptuous, but filial. How solicitous ought you not to

be, to arm yourselves with the habit of fortitude, necessary to repel vice, and the difficulties in surmounting it; necessary to acquire the other virtues, and necessary to look down upon the fallacious goods of the earth with contempt, as well as to look up with aspiring joy to heaven, under the pressures of future sickness, and present disappointments! In a word, how assiduous should you not be, in employing all your stock of mental vigour, all your freedom of will, and flow of strength and spirits, in acts of love and gratitude, and tenderness for the God who gives them to you, and in proving that love to him, by your love for your neighbour. While you are in health then, then is the time to move your limbs to prisons, to sick-beds, and to the hovels of the poor. Then is your time to labour industriously, to support and edify your own family, to feed the hungry, to cloath the naked, and right the injured or distressed. While your mind is clear, you may inform yourselves, and instruct others, you may stretch your hands to lend your money here, and exert your tongues to counsel or admonish there. You may pray, and fast, and give alms, and example. You may seek God, and draw others to seek him. But ah, my friend, if this be neglected in health; how shall we be able to do it during sickness! All this requires health, and vigour, and spirits, and activity, which fly before the face of infirmity. In sickness, you may indeed be patient and resign'd; but ah, what hopes are there, that you will be so, when unprovided with that fortitude, which is necessary to buoy up your patience and resignation? How shall you be able to soar to God, with faith and confidence in him, virtues you are unacquainted with, when your minds are borne down, by an overwhelming attention to pains and sickly qualms? How shall you lift your hearts to him, when weigh'd down by a load of bodily anguish? What spirits can you promise yourselves, to resist the temptations of a sick bed, when you have none to check the languor of your distemper? Can you attend to examine your accounts, and right the injured, when pains, and aches, and swoons, and faintings, almost rob you of yourselves? Or can you practice mercy to your neighbours, or love to God, when reduced to need the mercy of every-one, and almost to forfeit that of God, by a despairing hatred of yourselves? No. No Christians! Health is the time to acquire all those virtues, which in sickness you may want, and wish to practice; but will ever wish in vain, if you are not already provided with the habits of them. Of such infinit importance is it then, to live well during health. Be wise therefore, Christians; and as you know not how soon you or yours, may be in the condition of the sick son of the nobleman, in this gospel, wait not like him, till sickness overtakes you, before

before you recur to GOD. No, recur to him from this instant, and secure his protection against you are sick, by making a grateful use of the health, he now gives you, to acquire those holy habits, which you will find of the greatest stead to you.

II. But ah! My GOD, how many Christians, not content to imitate this Lord in the abuse of health, even copy after his delay in time of sickness! How many have I, how many have others of GOD's ministers, conjured to recur to GOD in the first stage of sickness. And can we scarce find one of you disposed to regard us. Look ye, Beloved, the moment to speak in the largest sense, the moment you find it necessary to send for physician or apothecary, you ought to think it of importance to send for your director. If there was no other good in it than this, it cannot but turn to account. As it is certain, that every weight upon the spirits, must backen a cure, and forward the distemper, it must be absolutely advisable, to rid the spirits as much as possible, of every weight which oppresses them. And your case must be desperate indeed, if the sins and neglects you have been guilty of, are no weight upon your spirits, when sickness overtakes you. Or if they are a weight, the removing that weight cannot but lessen your load, alleviate your disorder, and open a freer passage to medicinal remedies. Is it not a strange intimation then, to be so averse to a practice so beneficial to the body, when no better a reason can be given for rejecting it, than that it is salutary to the soul? O rational creatures where is your thought; whither is reason fled? Will your being under the immediate protection of GOD, by having reconciled yourselves to him, encrease your distemper, or render your medicines less efficacious? Why then, all this reluctance. But alas, what hopes can I entertain, that my remonstrances will have any effect upon you, who consider the need of them at a distance; when they have so often proved abortive, even on the brink of danger. How many, yes, how many have I visited uncall'd for, when I have heard of their illness, from a nurse, or a doctor, and exhorted to prepare against danger. And how seldom have I succeeded till too late, to be certain of being truly useful. I cannot go about it now; I hope I shall be better anon, is the too frequent answer. O wretched folly, if you find it so difficult, to attend to the most important concern of life, when but half disorder'd; what reason can you have to think, you can better attend to it, when wholly oppress'd. Who knows, how soon this fever may fly up to your head; how soon your senses may fly out of your reach, how soon this wound may turn to a gangrene, this sickness to a death? To-day you send for the doctor, and to-morrow you send for the

priest. Are you sure he will be in the way; are you sure if he is, that you will be in a condition to benefit by his visit? To-morrow. *Fool this night*, perhaps this very night, *thy soul shall be demanded of thee*, says the Holy Ghost. O Christian souls, then be serious, and think well on it. Take not example from this heedless Lord, who, but for a miracle, had hazarded the life of his son, perhaps the soul of his son, by deferring to recur to the divine physician, till he was at the point of death. No, do you begin the cure of your bodies, by that of your souls; send for his ministers, that by a Christian reconciliation with GOD and his Church, you may secure yourselves the Divine protection, and render your disease a moral good; and to do this reflect, if a sick-bed repentance is so precarious, as it really is, how much more dubious must not a death-sweat repentance be?

O Christians, if you sanctify the beginnings of a sickness, of what service will you not make that divine visit to you. For a visit of GOD it is: Yes, and a gracious one, perhaps never more necessary than at this present time, when vice is as rife as infirmities. And therefore may I apply to the present contagion, those words of the prophet, *there is no evil in the city which the Lord hath not done*. 'Tis even so: There is no evil haunts your bodies this day, but for the cure of your souls. GOD would not be omnipotent as St. *Augustin* remarks, if he could not draw good from evil. And O what important good does he not draw from the evil of sickness! This woman, that man, perhaps, led away by example, was on the brink of iniquity, when GOD brought them back by a sudden disease. This young woman, perhaps, had been utterly damn'd by the pride of her beauty: But GOD to beautify her soul, with the ruins of a face, sent her a small-pox. And O merchants and tradesmen, such of you as are yet unresolved to restore what you have gotten by fraud, if you resolve not speedily, GOD may, and I hope will if it is needful, visit you with a raging fever, and bring you into justice. Yes, I will, says GOD. *I will strike, and will heal*. O how serviceable then, is sickness to the soul! *Thy visit*, says experienced *Job*, *hath preserved my soul*. And so it will yours, Christians. You will find this natural evil, a real moral good, if you use it but rightly.

Sickness is the school, where every virtue is practised, if we take care to secure the habits in time, by setting out with sanctifying grace. Then it is we pray with fervour; then it is we make acts of faith, and hope; then it is we are call'd upon for patience and resignation; then it is that our hearts are open to acts of humility, justice and charity; and the weaker our bodies are in the execution, the stronger are our souls in the intention, and wishes. Then is it in a word, that we become saints, if e-

ver, according to that of St. PAUL, *When I become weak, then I am powerful, for virtue is perfected in infirmity*, that is, if we take care to sanctify the beginnings. Learn then, O Christians, to reap these advantages from sickness, against you come to stand in need of them. Be not like the heedless lord in our gospel, presumptuous to the last. Miracles are not to be depended on. You see the dangers of delay: You see the benefit of recurring to God seriously, and you see them both in him. By too great a delay he made a miracle, necessary to relieve him: And yet at last, by recurring to God with fervour, he obtain'd that miracle. Imitate then his fervour and faith; but copy not his delay. If you depend on a like miracle, your presumption will be folly, and God will mock at that folly, and laugh at your latter end.

III. But ah! Christians, if you may not copy his neglect, you may learn from him to be grateful. He when his son was restored, acknowledged the divine favour and believed himself and his whole house, and believed with a faith animated with good-works, otherwise his belief had not been worthy of the evangelist's notice. But ah! Christians, how few of you, when restored from a severe illness, can have the thought of giving thanks to God, and approaching at your first exit to the holy sacraments, to acknowledge the divine mercy! How few of you remember the good purposes you made, when upon the verge of death as you thought! And O how many return to their vomit again! How did you wish, how did you pray for a reprieve from death! What protestations did you not then make of desiring to live your lives over again, only to live to God! And how seriously did you not then vow, that if God would restore you to life, you would devote that life wholly to him, and to the acquisition of those virtues you found yourselves in want of! This you cannot deny to God nor man. God was present, nay, I have been present with some of you: And O how many of these scenes have I not seen! What agonies, what terrors, what convulsions of anxiety, did not then appear in you, for fear your prayers and protestations should not prevail. How did you curse your past neglect, bless your present purposes, and bless the sickness which occasion'd them. How

did you not hope, and fear, and wish, and almost despair, and hope again! Perhaps, there may be some here, who could witness the truths I have now utter'd. And O that they might but stand here a while in my stead! How much more feelingly, would they not describe the terrors they then were in, than I can do! How lively would they not paint them, while they are yet fresh in their memories. And O heaven, grant they may never forget them. For O what miseries have they not to fear, who after so much experience of the danger of living ill, should relapse again into vice! Have a care then, Christians, how you act. If you should forfeit your sick-bed vows, now you are restored to health, your baseness will be doubly heinous. Your re-establishment, design'd by God a mercy, will become a curse. And future sickness can afford you little hopes. If you deceive God now, yourselves will fall the dupes of your deceit. Live then for the future, as you wish'd you had lived, while you were sick. And that you never may relapse into those sins, which tortured you so much in sickness, never forget the purposes you made, the fears and pangs you felt, and the petitions you then offer'd.

In short, dearest Fellow-Christians, as you cannot but be now convinced of the dangers of perverting health, trifling with sickness, and abusing recovery: You who enjoy, undisturbed, a stock of good health, employ it to advantage, in the study of those virtues, which will never fail when health shall desert. You, who hereafter may be sick, dally not with salvation, by putting off your repentance and recourse to God till the last. Put not too much confidence in your physician, in his medicines, in your youth or constitution, and too little in God, and his sacraments and means. And you who have been sick, but are happily recover'd; forget not that there is a God to be thank'd; an acknowledgment to be made; that there are sins to be atoned for, a hell to be avoided, a purgatory to be fear'd, a heaven to be hoped for, virtues to be acquired, vicious habits to be conquer'd, passions to be controul'd, vows to be kept, grace to be augmented, and a soul to be saved. You have sinn'd and have repented. Go then, and henceforth sin no more, lest something worse befall you. And that God may give you grace so to do, I intreat: *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Twenty-first SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MATTHEW xviii. 23.

The kingdom of heaven is liken'd to a certain king, that would account with his servants.

NOTHING can be more natural, easy, or familiar, than the plain, tho' figurative instruction, which Christ gives us in the gospel of this day. What can be more within the reach of the meanest capacity, than the comparison of a king and his servants: --- A king so just, that he weighs the worth of the meanest of his vassals; and yet so condescending, that he stoops to a personal examination of them, to prevent their suffering unjustly, thro' partiality, prejudice, or misrepresentation: A sovereign so rigorous, as to threaten with absolute slavery, an insolvent and his family; yet a sovereign so generous, as graciously to remit the greatest of debts and offences, upon a simple promise of future satisfaction: In a word, a monarch so merciful, as to remit the grossest infidelities committed against himself; and yet so rigorously equitable, as to load a criminal whom he has just pardon'd with all the weight of re-assumed wrath, merely to retaliate the cruelty he practis'd against his fellow-servant. If this parable be not familiar, I know not what is. Apply it then, Christian, and know that, however wide inconsideration, may make it seem from any thing which concerns you, it is really applicable to none more than to yourself.

The King whom Christ speaks of in this passage is, His Divine Person itself, that Almighty Judge, who shall one day, call all his servants to a strict account of all their thoughts, words, and actions; and you, you, O Christian, are the unthrifty servant who are, and will then be found an insolvent debtor to him. Happy for you in the day of reckoning, if you should owe him no greater a debt than ten thousand talents unapplied, ten thousand inspirations neglected, happy only, if you should then have room to plead for mercy. But ah! Christian, what reason have you to hope for mercy, from your injured, exasperated sovereign, while you are inflexibly severe to your fellow servant? Persist then no longer in deceiving yourself, unless you become more merciful to your fellow-creatures, unless you are less prompt to revenge, more ready to forgive, what better have you to trust to, than the filial sentence of the reprobate servant of this gospel? He for his want of brotherly charity, was cast into utter

darkness. And if you are not warn'd by his punishment, to keep free from his offence, hear what will be your doom also. *So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every-one his brother from your hearts.* Let us then examin,

I. What this forgiveness consists in: *And*

II. How necessary it is to salvation, and on what accounts.

And thence you will be able to conclude, how little you consult reason or interest, in the grudges you retain to your offending neighbours.

"O thou dear Lord, who camest from heaven to suffer, on purpose to forgive, that thy forgiving us our infinit offences, might spirit us, from principles of gratitude, to pardon for thy sake, the trivial transgressions of our fellow-servants, O give us light, and grace, to know, and practice, this important duty, that pardoning from our hearts all them who trespass against us, we may not ask our own damnation, but ask and receive thy grace, in saying after thee."

I. *So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, says Christ, if you forgive not every-one his brother from your hearts.* From these words it plainly appears, that the forgiveness we owe to an offending neighbour, cannot be merely that sort of forbearance, which is rather an effect of insolent scorn, than of relenting mercy. To stifle resentment, because we think a person beneath our revenge, is an excess of arrogance. Distress, servitude, death itself, the most pusillanimous are sometimes able to confront with steadiness. But the most humble, scarce know how to bear being utterly despised; and the more magnanimous a soul is, the less is it season'd to, and the more unfitted for brooking contempt. Every individual thinks he has, and really has, some significance in him; and to rob him of that, by a kind of annihilating scorn, is the acutest sting our revenge can level. To forbear revenge then, from a principle of scorn, is not the forgiveness of heart, which Christ expects from you.

Neither can it be that sort of forgiveness, which extends, barely, to the not retaliating evil for evil. To be externally reconciled, to one whom we look upon as an enemy, and to withhold the effects of our hatred from him, may possibly be of some service

vice to him, but can be none to us, while we secretly cherish a rancorous remembrance of his former injuries. To forgive, and not to forget, as as much as in us lies, is doing our duty, but by halves. It is impossible, wilfully to dwell on the offence with disgust, without, more or less, cherishing a dislike to the offender, contrary to the injunction of Christ, to forgive him from our hearts. What then, can it avail us to check the outward showings of passion, while we foment it at the root? since by erring in one part of this great law, we shall be found defective in the whole.

Lastly, the forgiveness, which we Christians are to practise, must not be merely philosophic, like that of *Plato*, who never allow'd himself the liberty even to think of his enemies, merely from a desire of effacing out of his mind and heart, the very idea of such persons as offended him, in imitation of nature, which labours to destroy whatever is contrary to itself. No, Christian, no: It is the crime, and not the criminal, you ought to forget. In granting pardon to an offender, 'tis the fulness of charity to forget the offence, but it is the height of revenge, to blot out of your mind the remembrance of his person. In so doing, as much, as in you lies, you annihilate him, you reduce him to nothing. Since, were the Almighty to do the like by him, he would become nothing indeed.

The mercy then which you are to practise, as a Christian, is a generous and sincere compassion at heart for your neighbour's frailties, accompanied with a cheerful readiness for God's sake to excuse, remit, and forget as much as possible any injuries he may have done you, still remembring his person, to love him, and to serve him, when occasion shall offer. This, Christian, this is the charity God expects from you, and prefers to all other victims you can offer to him. *I will mercy, (says he) and not sacrifice.*

It is inconsistent with the divine justice, for God to accept the sacrifice of the unmerciful. No: He, who can reject the petition of his offending neighbour, will be rejected by God whenever he sues. *The same measure you measure to others, shall be measured to you again, says the Almighty.* The holy scriptures, and all history, sacred and profane, are full of instances, in which God has fulfill'd this terrible threat. Every-one knows the use to which the divine equity applied that very gibbet, which *Haman's* revenge had erected for the harmless *Mordochée*. Nor need I tell you, that the impious enemies of the *Jews* were almost, at the same time, by the just judgment of God, involved in the ruin their resentment had plotted against his chosen people. And, why was God thus severe to them, but because, by giving them-

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selves up to enmity and hatred, they had renounced his holy fear. For, as *Job* justly observes, *He who withdraws mercy from his neighbour, has lost the fear of God.* And therefore says St. JAMES, *Judgment without mercy shall be used to him who does not do mercy.*

Thus the enemies of *Daniel*, for wickedly carrying resentment so far, as to expose him to the rage of lions, were by God's Almighty arm plunged into the destruction they had prepared for him. And now we are talking of *Daniel*, did not God, by his mouth give a miraculous instance of his divine equity, in inflicting on the two perfidious elders, the very shame and death, which their revenge had machinated against the innocent *Susanna*. So often does God, even in this life, retort on the revengeful, the mischiefs, they meditate against their real, or fancied enemies.

But in the cases, I have mention'd, the revenge was unjust, you'll say. True, and what then? How often alas, is our resentment, full as unjust! How often do our chimeras make enemies even of our best friends! That superior, who reproved our unruly conduct ---- this inferior, whose virtues are perhaps a foil to our irregularities ---- and that equal, who refused to be accessory to some favorite sin we had in view ---- all become alike the objects of our unjust hatred, are set at bay by us; and our revenge, ten-to-one, is never glutted till we have run them down to death, distress, or, at least, to disgrace, if in our power. Can this be Christian, can this be even human, or can there be any thing in it to screen us from the resentment of God, whom we, ourselves, have so grossly offended? Ah! Christians, where is the forgiveness of heart, which Christ demands? Ah! How unlike is this behaviour to that which his immense charity set us an example of, when naked, bleeding, and expiring on the cross! So far from loading the authors of his agony with the effects of revenge, he becomes their advocate, *father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And, we, on the contrary, set up our friends for enemies, and hunt them to destruction, for not seconding the treachery of our passions. O Folly! Madness! What shall I call it? ---- For shame, Christian, for shame, blush at the very thought of such antichristian conduct, if you are not innocent of it, and tremble at it if guilty. For so shall, &c. unless you repent and forgive.

Don't imagin, beloved, that I mean only to dissuade you from that revenge, which you yourselves must own to be unjust. No: let me inform you, that no revenge, whatever, can be just, in one who is a sinner; however gross the injury be on which it is grounded, whatever be the condition of the offender, great or little, poor or rich, good or wicked,

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wicked, catholic heretic, or infidel. And, consequently, as all mankind are sinners, no man can be within the reach of the divine mercy who is revengeful to his neighbour.

For the clear understanding of this, I must promise to you two things. *First*, that God's mercy ever goes hand in hand with his justice. And, therefore, though, in his infinit goodness, he condescends to provide the greatest of sinners with means of atonement, and with grace to make use of them; yet, if a sinner, perversely will reject those means, and that grace, God must still be God, and cannot be so inequitable, or weakly compassionate, as to shew mercy at the expence of his justice. *Secondly*, we must all be obliged to own that our neighbours, comparatively speaking, cannot become debtors to us, but in very trivial matters, whether it be by offences they have committed against us, or by obligations we have laid upon them; both they and we being, by the limitedness of our natures, confined to act within a finite, very narrow sphere: Whereas, it is quite otherwise between God and us. We are all, to a man, insolvent debtors, to him, in an infinit sum; and, therefore, though it might be, perhaps, rigorous justice, yet it would still be irreproachable justice in him, was he to insist upon an infinit satisfaction from us, or, in lieu of it (as we have it not to give) an eternal punishment.

Surely then, it must be allow'd a merciful condescension in God to compound with, and acquit us of so immense a debt for a trifling acknowledgment. Do we not owe him inexpressible thanks, that he will deign to clear us of an infinit debt, on the easy condition of our rubbing out a finite, trivial score of our neighbour? With what joy and readiness ought we not to accept such seasonable terms! And this, Christian, is an offer he continually makes you. He requires not of you a multiplicity of prayers, which may interrupt the state of life he has call'd you to; a continued series of impracticable fasts beyond the strength of your constitution to bear; nor yet an accumulated heap of costly sacrifices? No: He expects you to pray, 'tis true, and to pray incessantly, but how? Not like those hypocrites, of whom he complains, *who honour him with their lips, but whose hearts are far from him*. No: But, as I have somewhere read in the Fathers, *He prays incessantly to God who always loves him*. This then, Christian, is the incessant prayer God especially likes, that you give him proofs of your love to him, by being merciful to your neighbour, in pardoning the faults you find in, and the injuries you receive from him.

Both God and his Church, direct you to try to ballance your accounts with frequent fasts, where your health will permit. Yet, the principal fasts,

which the Almighty sets a value upon, are those of the heart: And, they can no-ways affect your constitution. One fast from resentment will outweigh a whole life of abstinence from food. Whereas, let your fasts exceed those of all the fathers of the desert, they can be of no efficacy, but hateful in the sight of God, while you are revengeful. For,

The building temples to his honour; erecting altars in them for his worship; and making those altars frequently smoke with incense, and repeated victims to his honour, are undoubtedly grateful offices from a creature to his creator: But, that only from such as have first consecrated their hearts into living temples of his grace, raised in them altars of mercy, and, on them, sacrificed to him their private rancour against their offending brethren. Without this disposition 'tis vain to build temples, to found hospitals, or to erect altars. They are less guilty of sacrilege, who pull down churches, and lay waste the places of divine service, built with hands, than they are who erase, in their hearts, the altar of brotherly mercy. All victims, inferior to fraternal forgiveness, are so offensive to God, from him who reserves to himself the sacrifice of his own wrath, that Christ warns us never to insult God, by approaching to his altar in such a disposition. Nay, if, through inadvertency, we should chance to do it; he charges us to leave the sacrifice, unoffer'd to go and be reconciled to our offending neighbour: And this, not once only, nor twice, but seventy times seven times, *that is*, in short, as often as he shall injure you. So ungrateful to God is every sacrifice, which is not accompanied with brotherly charity!

No man, you see then, Christian, let the sacrifice, in his hand, be ever so great, is fit to approach the altar of God, without bringing mercy and peace in his heart. In the annals of the church we read of an unhappy wretch, who, though, in the act of sacrificing his life for the name of Christ, was rejected by God, and sunk into the number of the reprobates for want of this charity. Upon the point of receiving the crown of martyrdom, after a tedious train of the most acute torments, heroically suffer'd, he was approach'd by one whom he had long been at variance with, and who now threw himself at the suffering martyr's feet to implore his forgiveness. But the unhappy creature, who had conquer'd all the cruelties of his tyrants, would not conquer his own resentment, refused to forgive his suppliant enemy, and God so detested the sacrifice of his flesh, unaccompanied with that of his heart, that he withdrew his grace from him, and permitted him to deny Christianity, which he had no sooner done than he expired, and sunk so that utter darkness, which he purchased at so dear a rate, and lost the glorious crown he might have secured

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lost that crown of glory which he was just on the point of receiving

secured at so cheap a one. So disagreeable to GOD is every the greatest sacrifice of an unmerciful man! And, so true are the words of St. PAUL, *if I deliver up my body to be burnt and have not charity, it avails me nothing!* What then, O Catholics, will it avail you to be such, and to suffer as you do for being such, if you do not excel protestants in universal charity and brotherly forgiveness?

If then you would have your sufferings acceptable to GOD; if you mean to make your sacrifices grateful to him, let them be crown'd with charity. If you have that you will always be in a condition to sacrifice. Where do we find that ever a merciful man was rejected, by the Almighty, for want of another victim. On the contrary, he deigns to accept of mercy alone, as a compleat victim from him, who has no others to bring. *He who does mercy*, says the prophet, *offers sacrifice*. Say then, O Christian, what can be more reasonable than the demands of GOD? Must we not be out of our senses to reject such easy terms, from so infinit a creditor, who has the right and power to exact the whole? Or say, will it be wiser in us to exact from our neighbour the slight satisfaction of our revenge, and leave to GOD the necessity of exerting his. If we chuse the latter, do we not justify the utmost rigour of GOD's judgment against us?

Nay, the divine severity, which would otherwise be but nice justice, becomes downright mercy. For, surely, it must be own'd, in some sense, mer-

cy in a judge to leave to a criminal, the power of chusing his own sentence: And, if the criminal will chuse condemnation, instead of pardon, is the mercy of the judge less in granting him what he both deserves and insists upon? And, what other do we do, in gratifying revenge, than declare, that we prefer rigorous justice to saving mercy? When we beg GOD to *forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us*, and at the same time load them with the most bitter effects of our resentment; what else do we do but intreat GOD to deal as severely by us as we do by them? And too much, alas, have we reason to fear, that he will hear our prayer. The only way then, to repeat this divine prayer, with any safety, is to be always in peace with our worst enemies. In a word, if you not only stifle the effects of resentment, but forgive your enemies from your heart, and not only forgive the offender but endeavour to forget the offence; GOD will do the same by you. For the merciful *shall find mercy*. Otherwise, remember the fate of the unmerciful servant, in this gospel, who was deliver'd into the hands of the torturers. If you imitate him in his cruelty, expect to follow him in his punishment. For, *so shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every-one his brother from your hearts*. Mercy then, dear Christians, mercy. And, O all-gracious JESUS inspire thy Christians with it: I beseech thee, *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Twenty-second SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MATTHEW xxii. 20, 21.

Whose is this image and superscription . . . Caesar's. Restore then what is Caesar's to Caesar, and to GOD what is of GOD.

OTHAT I could but be sure of finding one human creature in all this multitude to converse with! How would I bless my Maker for creating me a sociable being! Day as it is, what would I not give for a lanthorn to find out one real man of either sex. You seem alarm'd, beloved. What, you cry, is the man blind? Or, what do you make of all of us? Surely, you do not take us for monsters? Or, is it not enough to have once unchristened us, unless you even try to unman us. What outrageous usage is this! Hold, beloved; be not angry without reason. I entertain no monstrous ideas of you. The figures of none of you startle

me, and your actions I know not enough of, to be offended at, or pleased with them. If you do not unman yourselves, 'tis not in my power to do it. I neither presume to say, you are not human, nor can I take upon me to vouch that you are such, because your forms do not shock me. I only then ask a modest question. And, surely, a question may be ask'd where a doubt may arise. If you are not really what you pass for; the question is not improper: And, if you are, you have reason rather to be pleased, than displeased, at a doubt which affords you the opportunity of asserting your dignity. Suppose me then, for a few minutes, an absolute sceptic, so absorb'd in doubt and uncertainty, that I cannot believe my own eyes: Or, think me, at least, a *Didymus*, who cannot give into any belief, but what is made palpable to me: How would you go about to convince me that you are, all of you,

individuals of mankind. As for you, ladies, for so I must call you to keep your attention in humour, since, miracles abstracted, where is the woman who would not be a lady, even at the foot of God's altar. As for you, you, I know, will have immediate recourse to your glasses. Well, be it so: What do they say? Why, surely, these eyes, this mouth, these features cannot but be human. Why so? The very fish in the sea have eyes and mouth, and features as well as you; and, full as comely, in their kind, though not distorted by affectation, as yours often are. But, then, they have scales and fins, and you have none. You walk upon two feet, so do the birds of the air; in this, however, superior to you, that they can inhabit the purer regions of the skies, while you are reduced to cling to your mother earth. But you make use of articulate sounds, so can many of them, with this advantage above you, that they never pervert them with design. But you have no feathers; you are sleek, upright and gaudy. Alas, has not the gaudy, foolish peacock, greater room to pride in feathers, all its own, than you to glory in your borrow'd plumes? Still you have sagacity, and art and industry: So has the timid hare, the fearful hind, and the laborious ant; look but around the four-footed creation, and you may gain improvement. But, 'tis encountering the wind, to reason thus at toilets, where nothing, scarcely, but the stroke of death, can satisfy a self-admirer that she is not something more than even mortal. Let me, then, turn to you, robusser sex, what better proofs can you alledge for being human? You want not glasses to enhance your pride. You know, by rote, that you are lords and masters of this wide creation, nay, nothing less than sovereign lords, if one may credit you; and that, not only over birds and beasts, and all beneath them, but, even, over those, your equal mates, but weaker vessels. Yet, what have you to prove your being human more than these? If you have no more to prove you so, than your exterior form and inward strength, and little artifices, can I call you men? No: Man is something more than a mere, absolute, unfeather'd, upright animal. Man is a noble being, form'd by God to his own image. "So are we, *you'll both reply*: We have "a will, a memory and understanding, to resemble "him: We are endow'd with souls immortal too, "like his, and superscribed by him." Now, you say something, brethren, and I'll own you men, and happy men. But I have one scruple yet. The Holy Ghost informs me in the book of WISDOM, that God *indeed created man immortal, and made him to the image of his likeness; but, thro' the envy of the devil, death entered into the world, and they who take part with him become like him.* Now, are you men according to God's forming you, or

have you suffer'd Satan to deface his blessed image in you? You have immortal souls enrich'd with will, with memory and understanding: But, are they stamp'd with a similitude of purity to his: Are they superscribed with his distinguishing grace? Or, is your will stamp'd with earthly affections? Is your memory fill'd with any thing foreign to God? Is your understanding impress'd with the maxims of the world, more than of heaven? In a word, *whose is the image, and superscription on your souls?* Not *Cæsar's*, I hope; not *Satan's* the avow'd prince of the world. No, dear Saviour, thou hast long since promised, that the judgment of the world, should be at an end, and the prince of this world be banish'd from our hearts. And so I hope, he is from yours, Beloved. Enough is it, that the world and its followers, bear his image and inscription. What have you to do with either, but to renounce them? You are stamp'd in your creation, with a glorious image: You have received an invaluable superscription in your redemption. And whose is this image, and this superscription? It is of God, Beloved: It is of the great God. Ah Christians! If then you have usurp'd from *Cæsar*, from the prince of this world, any thing which belongs to him; renounce it, give it back. In a word, *Restore to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and to God, what is of God.* This I dare say, (such is my favorable opinion of you) you will be glad, nay eager to effect; when once I have shewn you, as I now intend to do:

- I. The importance of preserving in your souls, the glorious image of Almighty God, unblemish'd: *And*
- II. The excess of grateful love you owe him, for mercifully deigning to make you like him.

"O thou too amorous Lord, who, purposely
"to pique us with a laudable ambition, to be truly
"images of thee, did'st mercifully leave thy heavenly throne, and dwell among us! Oh! let not
"so much bounty be all lost upon us; But since
"thou did'st even chuse to be exalted on a cross,
"to place thyself in fuller view to us; keep our attention fix'd to this bless'd form, till we become
"not only like, but even one with thee."

I. *David* prophetically contemplating the excess of goodness, which the eternal Son of God express'd, in coming down on earth, to pay an ineffable visit of redemption to mankind, breaks out into an extatic rapture of admiration and grateful love. O my God, says he! *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou do'st visit him.* Ah! *David*, has't thou forgotten the excellence of human nature? Do'st thou not know,

that this fair creature, man, this last great favorite master-piece of the Almighty's hand, is of a kindred nature with his divine Creator; rich in a soul, the very breath of GOD; and made to reflect the image of it's heavenly parent, both in male and female? Yes, yes, my GOD, says the transported PSALMIST. *Thou has't made him little inferior to the angels, with glory and honour thou has't crown'd him, and has't appointed him over the works of thy hands. Thou has't subjected all things under his feet, sheep and oxen, moreover, also the beasts of the field.* O glorious creature man! Such is the excellence of thy exalted nature. Such thy original dignity; created little inferior to the angels; created to lord it over the universe besides, and created to reflect the likeness of him, from whom thy dominion is derived. How then, beloved, ought not you to pique yourselves, upon expressing that noble image, in which your greatest excellence consists! How jealous ought you not to be, of maintaining that superiority, which your gracious GOD invests you with! Not by an empty strut, or self-elating arrogance, but by consistency of conduct, in exerting that intelligence, in which your superiority is placed. Tully, tho' but a pagan, tells you, that "it behoves every man, inasmuch as he is man, not to degenerate from the dignity of man." But how do you degenerate, and how unlike yourselves are you; if stamp'd with your Creator's likeness, your actions quite efface his image; if, little inferior to the angels, your groveling appetites, are suffer'd to place you on a level, with those irrational creatures, over which the Almighty gave you reason to preside! There is difference, says St. *Augustin*, "between the life of brutes, the life of man, and the life of angels: The life of brutes, seeks only what is earthly; the life of angels, seeks only what is heavenly; and the life of man is constituted between that of angels, and that of brutes." The man therefore, who lives according to the flesh, is upon a level with brutes, while he, who lives according to the spirit, is a companion for angels."

So true is this reasoning of St. *Augustin*, that if we look but back to our grand-sire, *Adam*, we shall find, that, while he preserved his innocence, while he kept within him, uneffaced the image of GOD, and persevered in obedience to the GOD he was created like, he was not only a companion for angels; but even the Almighty himself deign'd to commune with him familiarly. And, how alas, did he degrade himself and his posterity, of this desirable excellence? O how I blush for my unthinking parent, when I reflect on this weakness! Why—a servile groveling appetite, to what was earthly, sunk both him and his posterity, from a familiarity with GOD, from the society with angels, to an equality

with brutes. Happy and great, and free, under Obedience to the Almighty, he could not, *that is*, he would not remain so: GOD says to him; *Thou shalt not touch this tree.* "Why so, Lord? If it be good, why may not I touch it; if it be evil, what has it to do in paradise? Certainly it's being here, speaks it's goodness, why then may I not touch it?" Because I will have you obedient. The tree is good, but my command is better. Therefore I will not have you touch it. I am your Lord, you are my servant; I am the substance, you are the shadow, and therefore are to be attach'd to me. How can you be attach'd to me, but by obedience to my precept? This then is cause sufficient. If you won't think it so; renounce to being my servant, my image and my shadow; or otherwise adhere to me. There is a good in tasting of this tree, but 'tis fatal good, the good of earthly knowledge: There is a good in leaving it untouched, a solid good, the good of obedience; and that is heavenly, because 'twill keep my image inviolable in you. Take then your choice: For both you may not have. Man took his choice in fact; but ah the wretched choice! The heavenly would not satisfy him: He liked what is earthly better. He chose it; effaced GOD's image in his soul; and miserably fell from the divine familiarity, to the society of brutes, whom he was first made superior to.

Thus, Christians, thus did man's grovelling appetite for earthly good, give birth to sin; thus did sin efface GOD's sacred image in his breast; and thus through Satan's envy, did death enter into the world: And man by taking part with him, became like him. O glorious creature man! To what a depth art thou fallen! How has thy strength forsaken thee! How is thy beauty faded! *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning!* Now, thou has't effaced the image of GOD in thy heart, to liken thyself to Satan, the *Cesar*, and prince of this world, in pursuing with the beasts of the earth, the pleasures of the earth! *O that thou hadst but known in thy days (of innocence) the heavenly things which pertain to thy peace!* How would'st thou not have loath'd all which is earthly! But now, alas, in the night of original sin, and universal corruption, *they are hidden from thy eyes.* O hapless, deplorable blindness! *Man when he was in honour, did not understand,* says the PSALMIST. *He was compared to senseless beasts, and became like them.* This, this is the wretched fruit of sensuality; this the consequence, of subjecting our reason to our passions, the spirit to the flesh. From children and images of GOD, we are become the slaves and imitators of Satan: And, like him, preferring self-love to the love of GOD, we are fallen from the society with angels, to the level with brutes, nay beneath them. In this be-
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neath them, that by our own perversity, we have compared ourselves to them. "It is worse, says "St. *John Chrysostom*, to compare ourselves to "brutes, than it would have been to be form'd "such. To be naturally void of reason, is excusable: The poor beasts who are so, did not make "themselves. But for man, adorn'd with reason, "to stoop himself to a sensual comparison, with irrational beings, is a crime of the will." And therefore inexcusable. O blind perversity of man, to sink such native excellence, to so much meanness! O noble creature, where is thy greatness now, plunged as thou art, in an abyss of darkness? How shall thy likeness to thy God appear, through the thick night of original sin, in which thou art buried?

O thou eternal wisdom! Thou inextinguishable light! Thou only canst disperse the clouds of sin and error, which darken this thy once loved image. O heavens, pour down your dew then from above, and let your clouds rain down the just. Let the earth open, and bring us forth a Saviour, which has brought forth such sinners. Restore, O God, thy once loved image man, to his first dignity. Let grace appear, and Satan's likeness and characters be erased that thy bless'd image may be seen again, in all its brightness. This, Christians, God has long since done. Unwilling to leave the image of his glory, his favorite creature, a prey to the infernal enemy, he sent his son, his dear, his only son, to efface the serpent's likeness in him, and renew his own, and this he has effected with his precious blood, taking man's nature on himself, to link us more inseparably to him. View him upon his cross, and view him attentively. Reflect what he has done, and suffer'd for you, to draw you to a likeness to himself. The first man he created so like himself, that he was little inferior in that likeness to the angels; and tho' that likeness was effaced by original sin, so strongly has his mercy renew'd it with his blood, and by his hypostatic union of human nature to his own, that he has even raised mankind above the angels.

For which of the angels, did he vouchsafe to die, when they by pride, had fallen from their likeness to him? No, this was a favour he reserved alone, for his more favorite image man. When Satan erased God's image from his soul, by his revolt, him and his rebel followers he hurl'd into unutterable misery, for the first offences. But such was his excess of love for you, O man, that after numberless offences, by which you had become of Satan's part, and suffer'd his foul likeness, to efface the semblance of your Maker; he to make you like, nay, one with him, stoop'd to become both alike, and one with you. Ah! Christians be awake. Shall God then think it of such importance, to have you like him-

self and you not think it so. Shall your Creator and Redeemer for this, be at such cost and pains, and you think it much to be at any. O unexhausted bounty! Who can endure this sweet extreme of thy unpurchased love, and not be melted into eagerness, to love thee with an equal flame. Ah! What canst thou, my God, be better, greater, or more happy, than thou art, for our being like thee? Thou wast forever blest, ere we were made, and wouldst be equally the same, were we destroyed. He made us, Christians, for ourselves, he wants us not; 'tis we want him. And therefore, 'tis that he would have us like him, that by belonging to him, he may belong to us. The soul of man, he therefore made his image, by making it immortal and indissoluble, that we might be forever his. "The image, says St. *Augustine*, properly belongs to the form, whose image it is, the "figure to the nature." If then you are his images, his figures, do you not belong to him? The pride, the avarice, the lusts, and the vanities of the world, then have nothing to do in your hearts. They are the images of *Cæsar*, Satan the prince of the world, and are inscribed by him. Whereas your souls are stamp'd with an infinitely nobler image, and inscribed with immortal charity. And whose is this image and superscription? It is of God. Ah! Christians, be then yourselves, be just to God, and just even to Satan. Restore to him, what is his: You have no right to it. Give then to *Cæsar* what is *Cæsar's*, and to God what is of God. Renounce to Satan the pomps, the vanities of the world, and the lusts of the flesh, and give up wholly your minds, your hearts, your souls to God, whose images they are.

II. If you but seriously consider the infinity of God's goodness to you, in making them such; I am convinced the generous sentiments of soul, you all seem full of, will make you eager to do it, from a principle of grateful love. I scorn at present, to make use of the low arguments, of eternal threats, or promises, to induce you to resolve, on doing God this justice. As you, I hope, scorn to stand in need of such mere, servile, mercenary motives. No, let slaves be spur'd by whips or hire. You are free children of the Almighty, made free by that liberty, which Christ purchased you, at the price of his precious blood. There needs no more then to make you grateful, than to set his favours to you, in your view. The shewing you, how greatly he has loved you first, will sure suffice to melt you into love for him. And needs there any other instance of his love than this, of making you the living pictures of himself? The noble copies of his heavenly countenance? This glorious semblance of him in you, he made not by the intervention of any other beings, inferior

inferior to himself. No, GOD himself, that nothing might be wanting in you, to resemble him, drew out the noble plan by his eternal wisdom; He too, by his own infinit power, brought you to light with his hand divine; good as he is great, compleated you by his unparallel'd beauty, and to give life to your resemblance of him, breathed into you an emanation of himself. Ah! Can such love then, deserve to be slighted? Or can you overpay it, should you even dissolve with love for him?

If your own pictures, those pictures you are so fond of, for being such, were capable of love, who would you think they ought to love so much as you yourselves, whom they resemble? Much more, if they were made by your own hands, would you expect upon a double score, that their affections should be center'd in you. From your own children, you expect the strongest proofs of love, because they are like you, and more, because yourselves were instrumental to that likeness. Ah! Can you then without shame, refuse your love to GOD, whom you resemble, so much more, who was not barely instrumental to your being like him, but is the first and supreme source of what you are; who made you like him, and gave you souls on purpose too, to love him? Why did he make that heart of man so great, and so capacious, that all the universe of mere created beings, can't suffice to fill it? Why, but that GOD alone might fill it? "Yes! GOD, says *St. Augustin*, our hearts are uneasy, unsatiated, "and restless, till they repose in thee."

Well, gracious Maker, thy bounty is as evident as 'tis ineffable. We own with pride, a grateful pride, that we are like thee, nay, thy very images, and therefore properly belong to thee, whose hands beneficent have made us so. With all the gratitude our souls are capable of, we praise thee for this likeness. O suffer not one spark of foreign love to stain, disfigure, or efface it in us. But graciously embellish it with an encrease of grace, making us still more comely images, and more resembling thee. O let the precious fountain of thy sacred blood, supply us with continual helps, to love and copy still more after thee, in every virtuous practice. In patience, fortitude, in charity to all mankind, and sovereign love for thee.

But ah! Christians, why do we ask all this? Why, but to grant us this, did GOD's eternal son, stoop from the heavens his glory, when sin through Satan's artifice, had sullied in the soul of man, the brightness of his image? So grieved was he, to see his well, his dear-loved creature man, bereft of all his excellence, by losing this, that he descended from his heavenly throne, and took his very image on himself, to purify, reform it, and re-establish it, in all it's native beauty. To this, did all his labours tend, all his sufferings; and all the blood he shed

was shed for this. Now all he requires of us in return is, that we keep this sacred image, in the pure state he has restored it to. That we fully it no more with sin, nor thrust it from our souls, to give reception to the likeness of the prince of darkness, by hankering after what is his, the pride, the lusts, and vain allurements of the flesh or world. And to encourage us to make him this return, he graciously promises to recompense our struggles, to be like him, with such additions of abounding grace, as shall improve our likeness to him. Ah! Why, my soul, then do'st thou not labour without cease, to beautify this likeness of thy GOD? Why do'st thou not toil by day, by night, still to be more and more like him. O sovereign author of my soul, whose bounteous hands have made me to thy likeness, whose precious blood has wash'd away the stains, which sin first soil'd this image with, O sprinkle us with the hyssop of thy grace, that we may keep this image clean, as thou did'st make it by thy death and sacraments.

This, Christians, GOD is ready to accord. But he requires still, that you should do your parts. He who made you, and made you like himself, without you, will neither save you, nor preserve you like him, without you. He expects you to make use of the freedom and grace, he has given you to renounce, the empty enjoyments of the earth, where they are opposit to the enjoyment of him. They are the properties of Satan, the *Cesar* and prince of this world. For they are stamp'd with his likeness and inscription. You then have nothing to do with them. You are immortal beings, and superscribed in your baptism, with the indelible characters of grace. And whose images and superscription are these? Are they not of the living GOD? To him then they properly belong, and you cannot without injustice, as well as ingratitude, withhold them from him. Restore then, Beloved, restore in the name of JESUS, *Restore to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to GOD what is of GOD.*

Yes, loving Lord, we will, with chearfulness, even from this minute, we renounce to Satan, whatever is his, whatever is not pleasing in thy sight, the flesh, the world, and all affections to it, incompatible with the love of thee. To thee alone we give our senses, souls, and all we have to give thee. But ah, dear GOD, thou knowest us full well, what poor frail things we are, prone in our flesh to all that's ill, and impotent in good. Without thy aid, we may again disfigure these precious images of thee, with fresh offences, but without thee, in vain we labour to adorn them, or preserve them clean, as thou has't wash'd them. O by that unexhausted mercy then, by that divine excess of love, which moved thee to delineate thyself in us, we ardently implore thee to protect us all, with thy improving efficacious

efficacious grace, that we may never faint or be tired in loving thee, but daily more and more, advance in virtue, and likening ourselves to thee, till thou shal't think us fit to be admitted to the en-

joyment of thee. And that the Almighty may hear our humble prayer, I earnestly beseech him, *In the Name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Twenty-third SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MATTHEW ix. 20. 21.

And behold a woman which was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touch'd the hem of his garment. For she said within herself, if I shall touch only his garment, I shall be safe.

THE whole life of Christ, without impropriety, may be said to be a kind of divinely well-order'd poem, every incidental action of which is a heavenly episode, design'd at once for our edification and instruction. This appears no where more evident, than in the present gospel; the main action of which is the raising to life the dead daughter of a certain prince: A miracle, which, if taken even in a literal sense, is one of the greatest Christ ever perform'd on a human body; but, if explain'd in the figurative sense, it includes, comprehends the great end of all his miracles, the supernatural re-animation of the soul: A miracle, in a word, which, while it enforces our faith in the mysteries reveal'd to us, urges our compliance with the precepts enjoin'd us. However, as the whole life of Christ must be (like the seamless garment his holy Mother wrought him) all of a piece, it was impossible he should leave the least interval of it, unfill'd with miraculous proofs of his divinity and ineffable instances of his sovereign goodness. And therefore tho' the space could be but short, between his hearing the prince's grievance and his redressing it; yet, short as it was, he fill'd it up, you see, with a miracle by the way almost equal to that, which he was principally intent to perform.

Thus far may suffice, to give you a general notion of the contents of this gospel; and, to shew you, that the whole is too pregnant with mystery, and too rich in instruction, to admit of a full explanation of all it's parts, in the narrow compass of one evening's lecture. For this reason, I shall, at present, intirely confine myself to consider the incidental part of it, which alone is sufficient to furnish us with ample matter of spiritual improvement.

It is pretty evident, that the woman, who could rely on the hem of Christ's garment, for a remedy

to her disease, must necessarily have a strong and lively faith, in the virtue issuing from his sacred body: And, 'tis equally evident, from the success of her application, that her faith was not ill-grounded. Every Christian must acquiesce to this: And every Catholic, I dare say, in reading this gospel is excited, at once, to admire, and envy this woman for her faith and success. Yet, who can believe as much, if we are to judge of the sentiments of Christians by their conduct?

If the hem of our Saviour's garment contain'd such virtue, that the bare touch of it, would cure an inveterate, obstinate disease of many years standing; what virtue must not his body itself contain? And, if his body alone is of such efficacy, that the simple touch of it is sufficient to remove all our corporal complaints; What benefit might not be expected to a distemper'd soul, which inwardly receives not only his body, but his soul; not only his human nature, but his Godhead? To what cause then shall I impute it, that Christians, that Catholics, who have a sure and speedy remedy, for all their ills, ever ready at hand, to apply to, in the person of Christ, linger on, as they do, in a dangerous, habitual complication of spiritual diseases? Would it not be a shame, Christians, to suppose you want faith, who pretend to admire it in this woman? And would it not seem inconsistent, to suppose you to envy her success, and, yet, not to be wishful to succeed yourselves? Yet, what laudable envy can I believe you capable of, who neglect the same remedy, tho' more eminently within your reach, as it daily is, in the holy sacrament of the altar? You cannot, surely, doubt of the truth of a mystery, which, tho' so much above the reach of human reason, is still so consonant with it. No, you cannot, it is impossible you should, doubt of a point of faith, you suffer so much to maintain. Blush then, O Christians, to think, that convinced of the sovereign efficacy of this divine remedy, you want to be put in mind of applying to it, and applying, in such a manner, as may render you worthy of reaping benefit from it. Are you not all sick at soul, much more than in body?

dy? But, how few of you all, are as eager as the poor infirm woman of this gospel, to sue to Christ for your remedy? And, even of the few who do apply to him, how small is the number of those, who following the example they affect to admire in her, approach to him with the reverence and devotion due to so awful a sacrament. But I'll forbear reproaches; and endeavour to remove the causes of them, in you, by briefly shewing you,

I. The necessity and advantages of frequent approaching to Christ in the holy eucharist; *to which I shall add: And*

II. Some of the motives and means, to excite and qualify you to approach worthily.

“Worthily did I say? Ah, Lord of hosts, let us do all we can, we must still own ourselves unworthy of approaching to thee, or being approach’d to by thee. Ah, go out then from us, Lord, for we are men and sinners, thou our God, and infinitely averst to sin. Ah, Lord! We are not worthy that thou should’st enter under our roofs. Say only the word, and our souls shall be heal’d. What, Lord, will not thy love in healing us sufficiently appear, unless thou make thyself, not only our physician but our food? Not only our guest but even our intimate. O purify us then, and fit our souls for thy reception, and since we cannot be compleatly worthy of thee in this life, make us at least as little unworthy as our nature will permit.

I. That Christ, is, really and physically present, in the holy sacrament of the eucharist, I have already proved, in my controversial discourse on this text: And, therefore, it will be needless here, to use any arguments to establish a point of faith already proved; since any, who are disposed to entertain the least doubt of it, may have recourse to that. Neither can it be necessary to bring any proofs to confirm you, Christians, in a belief, which, as I have already observed, you so constantly maintain, under the greatest disadvantages.

But, what can it avail you, to believe Christ to be personally in the blessed sacrament, if you are not solicitous to apply to him for the benefit he intended you in mercifully placing himself there? Why did he graciously stoop, to veil his glory, under the humble species of natural food, but that you might approach with confidence, to receive in him your soul’s spiritual food: A food so necessary to it, that it cannot subsist without? *Unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you shall have no life in you.* It is plain then, from these words of our Saviour, that it is essentially necessary for every christian to receive, at least, sometimes, the holy sacrament of the eucharist.

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But, how often we should receive it, Christ left us no positive rule; as if he thought it too stinging a reproach to prescribe how often we should receive him; when on one hand he is ever graciously ready to communicate himself to us; and we, on the other, stand ever in need of receiving him. Indeed, the church perceiving our spiritual indolence, and how much we stand in need of a spur, in our way to eternal felicity, has thought proper to oblige us to apply to this ineffable banquet, at least, once a year, under pain of being excluded her flock. And, yet, with what difficulty are we brought to comply? With what reluctance do we submit? And how superficially do we dispose ourselves? Alas, O man! What art thou? Vain thoughtless, inconsistent creature, fond of thyself, to a folly, careless of thyself, to madness; blinded by self-love, and by self-neglect destroy’d. What creature more persuaded of it’s worth than man? not *Lucifer*, himself. What insect more lavish of it’s being? Not the flame-courting moth or self-exposing worm. Ask man, who the world was created for? He will answer, *for him*. Why were the angels made? — To guard *him*. Why was Christ incarnate? To redeem *him*. Why did he lead a painful, laborious life? To instruct *him*. Why did he die on an ignominious cross? To rescue *him* from eternal death. Why did he rise, and ascend triumphant into heaven? To draw *him* thither after him. Why did he send his divine spirit, in his stead, after his departure? To pour on *him* the grace and lights necessary to salvation. Ask him, in a word, why did God leave himself a perpetual legacy in the holy sacrament? He will answer still, that it was for, and to *him*? Why, why is he daily offer’d on the altar, exposed to the eyes of the faithful, or deposited in the sacred tabernacle? To this end, man will say, that he might be intimately united with *him*. So full is man of himself and so convinced of the truth of his own greatness!

Yet, so unmindful is man of his true interests, so lavish is he of himself, as to sacrifice all these advantages to giddy indolence! O Christian, Christian! Slothful Christian? How much more inconsistent, base and groveling is thy pride, than that of *Lucifer*! He, created the first and brightest of angels, aspired to be like God: *I will ascend and will be like the most high*. Thou form’d of the dust of the earth, yet, invited to be one with God, in the reception of him, art mean enough to slight the honour. He, when he was damn’d, was damn’d, for aspiring to be like the most high, but you, if you are damn’d, will be so, because you would not be made Gods yourselves, *that is*, one with God, in the reception of his precious body and blood. To whom could the royal prophet mean

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to speak, when he said: *I have said, ye are Gods; and all of you children of the Most High?* Was he not prophetically speaking to Christians, who, by means of the holy eucharist, have it in their power to be intimately united with the divine being? But ah, how much more like *devils*, nay, worse than *devils*, are not those Christians, whom the censures of the church, can scarce prevail on to reap this ineffable blessing offer'd them, tho' but once a year; and, whom no consideration can prevail on to lay hold of it oftener? How wilt thou, O *Lucifer*, in the day of judgment reproach them, who, possess'd of all thy pride, want the courage to sanctify it, in aspiring to that likeness, with God, which is offer'd to them, tho' deny'd thee!

Think not, O indolent Christian, that alledging your own unworthiness, will be any plea to excuse your slothful neglect of this divine remedy against sin. No: Strictly speaking, none are truly worthy to receive the body of our Lord. The most innocent are, at best, but the least unworthy. Still, the only way to become less unworthy of receiving it, is to receive it often. Therefore, is it offer'd alike to the saint and the sinner. To the saint, to make him more perfect, *that he who is a saint, as David says, may be sanctified farther*. And, to the sinner, that he may become a saint, by this intimate union with the holy of holies. For, as the same royal prophet says, *with the holy, you will be holy*.

However great a state of grace you may be in, O Christians, you are still in a state of danger. Let him then, among you, who thinks he stands, take care lest he fall. And, how shall you preserve yourselves from falling, amidst the infinite dangers which threaten you perpetually on all sides, without receiving frequent recruits, of spiritual vigour, from this fountain of all strength? Have you not, on one side, the allurements of a flattering world, ever besieging you? Have you not, on the other, a malicious train of infernal enemies, ever studious to shake your constancy? And have you not the inbred traitors, your passions, lurking within you, ever awake to surprize you, ever ready to betray you, when grace shall grow faint, or virtue shall be unguarded? And, what other certain means of safety have you, amidst these manifold dangers, but, that of keeping up a perpetual correspondence with your divine Saviour, who alone is capable of securing you from the power of all your enemies? But, how can you propose to keep up this correspondence long, without frequently renewing your intimate union with him, in the holy sacrament of his body and blood? *He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, says Christ, abides in me and I in him*. If you abide in Christ, and Christ in you,

what have you to fear, what have you not to hope? If God is with you, who can be against you? On the contrary, if, slighting the grace, you received in your former communion, you are dilatory in renewing, Christ will be as slow in augmenting it. In a word, he will be no more with you, nor you with him: And *he who is not with me, says he, is against me*. As you forget him to be your protector, he will cease to look on you as his ally; your spiritual enemies will over-power you, you will fall from the state of grace you are in; and your former communions, instead of being of advantage to you, will add to your guilt and aggravate your misery. So necessary is it, for the best of Christians, to approach frequently to the holy sacrament of the eucharist.

Nor is it of less importance for you, O sinners! What, tho' you are already become slaves to satan; tho' you are made tributary to a care-enhancing world; tho' you are fallen the half-devour'd prey of your coarse-feeding appetites; must you, therefore, remain so? Is your case, therefore, so desperate as to admit of no relief? Ah, sinner! 'Tis the illusion of those enemies, who tyrannize over you. While you give ear to them, your evil is remediless. But, if you will be relieved, you may. While you are attach'd to the suggestions of the wicked, you will continue in wickedness; or, to express it in the words of holy DAVID, *with the perverse you will be perverted*. Fly then to the *holy of holies* in the blessed sacrament of the eucharist. *With the holy you will be made holy*, says the PSALMIST. Accept the invitation he makes you from the sacred tabernacle, where he is waiting with eagerness to relieve you. *Come, come to me, says he, all ye who labour and are heavy laden and I will refresh you*. And, whether else will you, can you, go for relief, O distemper'd souls, but to this sovereign divine physician? Who shall release you from the merciless yoke, of spiritual tyranny, you groan under, but He? In the sacred tribunal of confession, you may hope to receive your freedom from sin and satan; but, whither will you run, but to this source of grace, for an augmentation of that which you will there receive? Whither will you travel, to find the grace necessary, to conquer your bad habits, to resist the future suggestions of hell, to despise the empty enticements of an enslaving world, and to quell the frequent revolts of your rebellious passions; Whither, I say, will you steer in search of those virtues you are now a stranger to, but to this fountain of all grace, to this author of all virtues? And, how shall you hope to obtain them from him, but by a frequent intimate union with him, in that holy sacrament he so lovingly invites you to? If you receive him frequently, how intimate will you grow with him! *He who eats me, says Christ,*

Christ, *the same shall live by me.* Your life then will be no more the life of a sinful man, but the life of Christ. No more will you be subject to the temptations of the devil, but superior to them: No more will you be allured by a flattering world, but be void of taste for its vanities: No more will you be enslaved by your lawless passions, but proof against their suggestions. In a word, the more often you receive Christ, the more eager will you grow to receive again; till transform'd into him, you will think with St. PAUL, *I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.* Such is the importance, and such are the great advantages, which every Christian must reap from a frequent devout reception of Christ, in the holy sacrament of his body and blood.

And, are not these sufficient motives to induce you to receive him often, and to receive him worthily? Must I be forced, Christians, to place before you that eternal crown of bliss, which will be the reward of such, as by a frequent, worthy reception of him, have perpetuated their intimate union with him in this life? And, will that, even be too faint to excite your reverence? Well, then, if you are of so servile a nature, that nothing will deter you from abusing his goodness, but the fear of his punishments, hear what St. Paul says: *He who eats this bread and drinks this cup unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the body of our Lord.* Let no one dare then to approach to this holy sacrament, without disposing himself in the best manner to receive it worthily: Since nothing less than the eternal severity of God's judgment, will be the infallible consequence of an unworthy reception of it.

But, eternal misery, perhaps is not enough to affright you, 'tis future, and, you imagin, far off. But hold, Christians, hold. It may not be so far off as you vainly imagin: It may be at hand; and you, if you should deserve it, will not be the first instances of God's divine justice, in this life, should he take you off in the very act of receiving unworthily. How many strange distempers rage among men, which physicians know not the cause of? How many die suddenly, and others of sicknesses, which all are at a loss to account for? But, how many, alas, of these undiscover'd diseases, how many of these untimely deaths, will be accounted

for, in the day of judgment, from the sacrileges committed in the reception of this holy sacrament. This is no invention of my own, St. Paul himself enumerates these very particulars, to the *Corinthians*, to deter some among them from sacrilegious communions, whom neither the infinity of God's goodness could win to receive him worthily, nor the eternity of his severities could deter from receiving him unprepared. *Therefore are there among you,* says he, *many weak and feeble, and many sleep,* that is the sleep of death.

Ah! Christians! Be serious, and reflect how much it behoves you to summon all your attention, all your diligence to receive this divine nutriment worthily; *that is*, as worthily as a human creature can do. To do this, prepare yourself, by an humble confession, and sincere contrition at heart for all the sins you have committed. Place yourselves in as perfect a state of purity as you can. And cleanse your hearts not only of sin, but of every affection to it. Consider the greatness of the guest who is to reside there, and think, how unfit a guest for him will be any little favorit passion, any irregular appetite, any unclean affection. Sacrifice all then to him; and raise your fervor by acts of virtue, internal and external. In a word, study every time you approach to communion, study to receive him with more reverence and devotion than ever you did before; empty your soul intirely of all that is filthy and sinful, and labour to fill it wholly with him. For, to conclude with St. Ambrose: "With how great a contrition of heart, O Lord God; with what floods of tears, with what fear and reverence; with what chastity of body and purity of mind, ought we not to celebrate that divine mystery, where thy body is indeed taken, and thy blood indeed drank; where the highest unites with the lowest; the divine with the human; where thy angels are present, and thou thyself art wonderfully and ineffably both priest and victim. Yet, who, O Lord, can celebrate, or partake of this sacred mystery, worthily, unless you give him so to do? Grant us then, we implore, that grace we so little deserve, yet stand so much in need of." That worthily partaking of thee here, we may be more intimately conjoin'd to thee in thy glory hereafter. Which, &c. *In the name, &c.*

S E R M O N

On the Last SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

St. MATTHEW xxiv. 20.

Pray that your flight be not in winter or on the Sabbath.

IN the Gospel for this day, Christians, your divine Saviour is labouring to arm you against the terrors of the last, great and general judgment, by describing to you the danger of being unprepared for it's approach. And, that you may be in constant readiness to receive him as your welcome judge, who was so ready to exhibit himself your friend and advocate; he warns you of the moral impossibility of preparing yourselves, in the instant of his coming, on the account of the dreadful consternation you will, necessarily, be in, at the majesty of his appearance, as well as at the suddenness of it. *For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even to the west; so also shall the coming of the son of man be.* But, for a clearer comprehension of this, let me appeal to the last fears you were in, when lightning rous'd your sleeping consciences. However, they, perhaps, are all forgotten, and your resolves are vanish'd; all to nought, with the evaporated cause which gave them birth. Come then, dear Lord; once more, before thy last appearance, send forth this terror-striking harbinger of thy approach, to wake these drowsy people. O'erspread the heavens, with sudden clouds, and let each meteor strike fire, 'till flame embracing flame, the hemisphere shall flash with one broad blaze of lightning. Ah! Christians, you want the heart to join me in this prayer, that bravery with which you dare your distant judge, already fails you; and could one but inspect your souls, you shudder at the very thought. How then would you quake, if, while I am speaking, a sudden sheet of livid light should overspread the sky in fact! And, whence proceeds this panic which makes it's way, even to the most intrepid breasts? Whence comes it, that the bravest mortals, who, like unshaken rocks, can face, immovable, the fiery mouths of cannons, and wade through rapid floods to fight and challenge death amidst the flames, shall often shrink, with horror, at a sudden lightning in the air? The reason is plain, the former finds them on their guard, and arm'd with bravery and caution. The latter takes them unawares, ere they have time to summon resolution, or to recur to means of

safety. 'Tis then the suddenness of lightning which surprises: And, 'tis the subtilness which makes our horror reasonable, inasmuch, as it baffles all precaution; and carries it's baleful power to the deepest, closest, most remote recesses we can fly to. For the same reason then, as makes you dread the very thought of lightning, you ought to live in a perpetual fear of the tremendous, last approach of your Almighty Judge; and such a fear as may, by keeping you in constant readiness, lessen your fears, if not dispel them quite, when he shall actually appear. *For so shall also the coming of the son of man be:* Sudden as lightning. As lightning subtil and penetrating, from the surface to the center of the earth, his Power and Majesty will leave you no recess, no dark retreat to lurk in from his all-reaching presence. (Then, if you should be unprepared, you'll have no time to get yourself in readiness, when, if, unhappily, without the coat of justifying grace, 'twill be dreadful to go forward, and 'ah, too late to go back to repentance in search of it. *Pray, then, says your Saviour, that your flight be not in winter or on the Sabbath.* That is, fly from the wrath to come while it is summer, while it is a time of working: While you have youth, or vigour, or the means of grace, in reach. For, should you perversely put it off till the winter of old-age, of sickness, or to that period, when strengthened in virtue, you ought to hope for rest from all your labours; alas, your flight will be in vain. But, this, perhaps, affects you little; you feel life strong in you, and cannot be persuaded that the summer of your health is near an end. Well, then, to gratify your favorit weakness, I'll suppose you have some secret, sure against a morrow's fever, or this day's apoplexy. But, can you give me any assurance, that you and I are not the miserable mortals destin'd in the bloom of health, to see the son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven with much Power and Majesty? Who e'er the unhappy creatures be, doom'd to be witnesses to that dread sight, they will expect it as little as you do: And, yet, perhaps, none will have greater reason to expect it than you have; if any attention be paid to the portentous signs, which, Christ assures you shall precede it. Should this then be your case, what a hard winter will that be for you to travel in to meet your judge. If you neglect to labour in the little summer

summer left you, how will you labour in that *Sabbath*, when all works shall cease? How will you take your flight from danger, in a season, when horrors, facing you on every side you turn, shall throw you into such a consternation as shall rob you of all means of safety, and make it equally discouraging to halt or to advance. Ah! Pray then, Christians, pray that your flight from evil be not in the winter, or on the Sabbath. And, that I may induce you to make this prayer effectual, by watching constantly, while you enjoy the little summer of health, and means of grace left you, against the horrors of that wretched winter, now I shall shew you,

I. That it is not only not impossible, but even highly probable, that many here may live to be the sad spectators of it: *And*

II. Whether it be so or not, it highly behoves you all to stand in readiness for it.

“O thou, eternal judge, who graciously has’t warn’d us of thy second coming, give us the grace to reap the benefit which thou intendest us by thy all-merciful precaution, that ever ready to go forth to meet thee, our solid hopes in thy unfailing promises may dissipate the terrors of that period, when it comes.”

I. That none of those creatures, who are reserved to be living spectators of the second coming of Christ, may plead their consternation, at the suddenness of it, as an excuse for their want of preparation; our divine Saviour, while yet a Saviour, has left them sufficient marks of his future approach. Indeed in the very chapter, whence this gospel is extracted, he tells you all, *that of the day and hour, when this shall come to pass, No body knoweth, neither the angels of heaven.* Watch therefore, says he, *because you know not what hour your Lord will come.* Nay, continues our divine master, be always ready, *because at what hour you think not, at that very hour, the Son of Man will come.* And yet sudden and unexpected as that hour will be, when it does come; it will not be so sudden, but that it may be foreseen to be near at hand for many years, by the signs and wonders preceding it! And what are these signs and wonders; what are the previous harbingers of it’s approach? Why our blessed Lord tells us of two sorts, and those very remarkable ones. The one sort are the abuses of grace, the other the distortions of nature: The *First* the works of the Devil, and the *Second* the warnings of an exasperated God. The *former* are many years antecedent to the general judgment, and the last immediately preceding it. Now which ever we consider we shall find, that, keeping in our eye, the pre-

diction of our Saviour, we have the greatest reason to apprehend, that the day of universal judgment is near enough at hand for us, to expect it, even in our own days.

The first of these signs, then as we have it, from our Saviour Christ is, that *there shall rise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, so that the elect also (if it be possible) may be induced into error.* And when alas, can this prediction be nearer to it’s accomplishment, than it appears at present. Within these two last centuries, how many impudent, absurd, and detestable heresies, have not raised their heads! How many false Christs have appear’d, wretches so void of sense and honesty, as for the sake of gratifying their love of lucre, their lust of praise, or leud libertinism, have rent the Church of God, bid Christ defiance, and vented new conceited gospels of their own, instead of his, and what is still more glaringly audacious, made use of his revered authority, to give their errors sanction! What shall we say of *Luther’s* followers, fools who presume to shelter their absurdities, under the awful wing of Christ’s unerring truths, tho’ such absurdities, as even their wicked master blushes not to own, that he received in a nocturnal conference from *Satan*, the father of lies? Are they not manifest false prophets? What signs and wonders have they not feign’d, *to draw (if possible) even the elect to error?* For what a wonder is it not, far more surprising to sound reason than any mystery of our faith, that men who pride in owning Christ to be eternal truth, and men of no mean genius, nay multitudes of men like these, should blindly yield to contradict his most express commands and doctrines, to follow those of an obscure, debauch’d, and stupid outlaw, who has recorded himself the proselyte of hell, and voluntary dupe, to the known father of lies the devil. This is a wonder of such a nature as, if consider’d with superficial eyes, might startle (if possible) even the elect. What shall so many men of parts and learning, some poor illiterate innocents would say, what shall such men give into this new doctrine, and it be false? Sure nothing but a miracle could give so speedy an encrease, to such minute beginnings. In truth to eye it but on this side; who would not yield to be a *Lutheran*? But search this wonder to the bottom, and you shall see how false a sign it is. To what is owing the surprising progress of this lying sect of feigning prophets? The church of Christ owed it’s encrease to the minuteness of its origin: But in what did that minuteness consist? It consisted, as I have already shewn you, in humility, self-denial, and the cross of Christ: Principles all opposite to, and destructive of the maxims of the flesh. That from such principles then, this Church should gather strength, and draw mankind to even renounce

the flesh, to become members of it, must be a miracle indeed, because superior to the force of nature. But were the seeds of *Lutheranism* such? No they were the gratification of the flesh and appetites, and quite conformable to the propensity of man's corrupted nature; where then is the wonder, that they should find abettors?

Luther himself, began his heresy by private marriage, tho' a priest, and *Carlostadius* improving on his master, was the first priest, who dared to shelter this sacrilege, under that of public nuptials. But still they retain'd some irksome bounds to vice, which nature could not brook, and these their wiser disciples *Zuinglius* and his companions, help'd to remove, by taking off the real presence. *Calvin* still wiser than they all, gave the last stroke to virtue, by his sin-soothing, and flesh-inflaming blasphemies of grace inamissable. What wonder then, that these should gain such credit in the world! What wonder that from these tainted sources of corruption, such numbers of heresies and heresiarchs, should spring within the space of two hundred years as would, if number'd, exceed all those, which sprung and died in fifteen hundred years before! The wonder only is, that they should dare to call even Christ himself, the eternal truth of God, to witness to their falshoods. But if they did not this, they would not be false Christs, false prophets, such as Christ has warn'd you of. 'Tis by this sign you know them to be such: And now if you permit them to deceive you, it is your fault, not Christ's, who has sufficiently instructed you to guard against them.

When you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, says Christ, be that ready, let him understand: Then they who are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains. St. *Jerom* upon this text, warns us to take notice, that there is a figurative sense in this passage. For, says the saint, "When our Saviour calls upon our understanding, to exert itself, 'tis a sign that he is delivering some mystical doctrine to us." And to explain the mystical sense of this to us, the venerable father tells us; "By the abomination of desolation, is to be understood every perverse doctrine, which when we perceive creeping into, and rearing it's head in the Church, we ought to flee from *Judea*, that is from the *Jewish* or *Heretical* perversity of it, to the holy mountains of God's eternal truth, by which he illuminates, wonderfully, all who have recourse to it, under the roof of his infallible Church.

The abomination of desolation then, which these infernal sects have wrought in the very sanctuary of Christ, you yourselves, Christians, are melancholly witnesses to: You see them standing in the holy place. Are not the words of St. *Hypolitus*, quoted

by the *Romish* editors, strictly verified in your own days? "The sacred houses of Churches, shall be like to cottages, and the precious body and blood of Christ shall not be extant (openly in Churches) the liturgy (or mass) shall be extinguish'd, the psalmody shall cease, and the reciting of scriptures shall not be heard? Have not some of these false prophets and Christ's, engross'd and usurp'd all the sacred temples of God, to pollute them with their own abominations, have not others laid desolate the altars of the Lord, and have you any place to celebrate the mysteries of his awful majesty but garrets and cellars, and stables and cottages?

Is there not great reason to think then, that the judgment of God is at hand? Ah, be serious therefore, Beloved, and provide for your security, during the little summer, the little time for struggle which is left you. You who are yet in *Judea*, in the state of sin and perversity, flee to the mountains of Christ's holy faith and doctrine, and pray that the *Winter*, the *Sabbath*, overtake you not, before you have finish'd your Christian race and labour. Let such among you, as are reduced to serve your God on the house-top, take care not to lose the ground you have gain'd, by descending to the conversation of these false Christs, by entering to commerce with them, and taking any thing from your former dwelling of sin or error. He who is in the field of God's Church, let him not go out of it, to take on his coat of fleshly inclinations. No: Look forward, and suffer not yourselves to be decoy'd out of your salvation, by those lying prophets, nor any of their spurious offspring.

Thanks to the divine mercy, great as the tribulation is, which those false Christ's have afflicted the Church of the true Christ with, according to his own prediction, in his gospel: *A tribulation, says your Lord, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be any more; yet has God for the sake of the truly faithful, sown such confusion among them, as renders the reign of them all like that of a mushroom, the birth of a foggy morning, and the blight of an evening-mist. Tho' like locusts, they spread at their rise, yet like caterpillars they moulder to nothing before the sun-shine of Catholic faith. And indeed, as the eternal truth itself has told us, unless the days of their flourishing, had been shorten'd, no flesh should be saved: But for the elect, the days shall be shorten'd.* This you have seen in all the sects, which hitherto have sprung up. The spirit of discord has divided them, and from the enormous bulk they swell'd to, the loose luxuriant branches shooting from them have wasted them, till they are sunk to nothing, almost nothing. What are the sects of *Luther* or of *Calvin* now, if we survey them in the trunk, but a mere stump of rotten fuel. And all the

the little shew of existence they preserve, is in the withering branches they produced of independents, quakers, anabaptists, and other antic names unknown to Christ, and to his sacred gospel.

What tho' from the dregs of a mere shadow of a Church we see, even in our days, spring forth the giddy, empty, and luxuriant puff of methodism, yet shall that too ere it be long, wither before the face of truth, and share the fate of all preceding errors. If any man of these shall tell you then, Beloved, *Lo here is Christ or there*, believe him not. They are false Christs, false prophets all, whatever signs or wonders they may effect to shew. With all their outside piety, their inward principles are rottenness, and will not stand the search of truth. Why do they cry up faith in Christ, but to decry the saving works which he has taught us by word, and by example! Why do they fly to fields and desert places, but to decoy the elect from ritel worship in God's Church. Why do they like preceding heretics, scoff at all Church-authority, themselves still claiming that authority for sanction; why but to evade the power she has from Christ, of bringing them to order, and dissipating their absurdities, with her unerring truths?

Stand then, Beloved Christians, stand faithfully upon your guard, nor suffer their delusive wiles to ensnare you into error. They are false Christs, false prophets all. Take the precaution which your Saviour gives you. *If they shall say to you, behold Christ is in the desert; go ye not out.* Leave not the salutary pale of his pure Church to follow them, nor suffer curiosity, or love of novelty, to decoy you from your present safety, to listen to their passion-soothing speeches. *For he who loves danger, shall perish in it,* says the Holy Ghost.

For the same reason, if any man shall tell you, *behold him in closets, believe it not.* Such are those wretches, too fatally known, by the name of Janseists, who basely lurk beneath the grass, to spread their venom wider, and strike the sting of their pernicious doctrines, more deeply in the breast of the unguarded. Wretches by far more dangerous, than the worst of open heretics, as they elude the power of truth, by skulking in the dark, why do these monsters blaspheme the grace they are strangers to, by carrying it to the destruction of free will but to depress all merit, discourage virtue, and introduce the abomination of desolation, which they practice in their private conventicles, into the holy place of God's pure Church. If they had truth at heart, and if their doctrine was sound enough to bear the test of her examination, why should they labour with such subtil art, to elude the power of censure. By debiting their pestilential sentiments, to the tynary, under the ties of secrecy. That heretic is in some measure honest, who dares to utter his belief

in open day. But let them be priests, or what they will, they surely are false Christs, and lying prophets, who utter any doctrines, under tye of privacy, which they dare not publicly confirm in word, in writing, or in print. And if they dare, what reason can they shew for so much caution? Beware of such then, Christians. Janseist or seeming Catholic, Priest or lay-man, what e'er he be, who dares to debit to you any doctrine, under tye or air of secrecy, suspect him for a false Christ, a lying prophet, and shun all commerce with him, as you would with serpents. For such a one, tho' cloath'd in outside piety, like a second abbot *Paris*, nay, tho' he should shew great signs and wonders, yet is he fit, only to induce the very elect (if possible) into error. Take then the timely warning Christ has given you. Flee from their conversation, from the dangers which they threaten you with, and flee by times before the *Winter* or *Sabbath* overtake you, and prevent your flight. For what less can you conclude, from the abundance of false Christs and prophets, who in these latter times, have spread their abominations in the very sanctuary of Christ's flock, but that it is not only possible, but highly probable, that many of us, who are witnesses to the desolation they have wrought, are doom'd to be spectators of the terrors they are forerunners of.

However, if this previous omen be not sufficient to persuade you, that those terrors are so near, let us cast a passing eye on the signs, which shall immediately precede them. Those I have hitherto been speaking of, are you see abuses of Grace, the works of the devil, and antecedent to the dreadful period for many years; but these I am now to speak of, are the convulsions of distorted nature, the warnings of an exasperated God, and the immediate prelude of his last and awful coming. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darken'd, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from Heaven, and the powers of Heaven shall be moved.* And who that has but lived to man's estate, who may not vouch the accomplishment of this! How many total eclipses have we not seen, of sun and moon, within a few years past, more than were ever known before within so short a time, and one, by all avouch'd the greatest since the death of Christ? How many comets, in our time, have almost jointly warm'd, and terrified our hemisphere, whose different course has kept them wide of each-other, for many hundred years! If we have seen no falling stars, how many flaming meteors have burst about our ears? What are our modern northern lights, unknown of before the birth of some young people here? To what shall we ascribe the removal of great mountains, which, if there is any credit to be given to the general assent of public rumour, has happen'd more than once in our days? Whatever

flattering

flattering reasons we may borrow from the sciences, to reconcile these odd appearances of nature, they are all too weak, to pay us with conviction. In vain, we strive to account for that alteration of the seasons, which every-one who can but recollect the facts of twenty years ago, is witness to, and knows and feels; a change so great and so portentous, that many men of no small parts and learning, have not been ashamed to think aloud, that the whole universe must have received a shock. This tenet however, absurd it may appear, we know is not impossible, since Christ here tells us, that the very heavens *shall be moved*. Why may it not be now then, as well as any time hereafter? And what can be more probably than this, the cause of such a change in nature, as we all are witnesses to? Nay we cannot well doubt of it, if we compare these with the other signs I have already mention'd. *Many*, says Christ, *shall come in my name, saying I am Christ*. This you have seen in a *Luther*, a *Calvin*, a *Whitefield*, a *Trapp*, and other lying prophets, who set themselves up for so many Christs in fact, by treading down the gospel of the true Christ, to set up another of their own, in barefaced opposition to it.

And what if to swell the argument, I bring those other prodigies which Christ has left us? *You shall bear wars and rumours of wars*, says he. *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be pestilences and famines, and earth-quakes in places*. Has not the habitable world been fill'd these many years with wars, and then with rumours of them. How long has *Asia* and *Africa* been bleeding beneath the weight of foreign wars and civil broils. Is not *nation* risen *against nation*, even in the heart of *Europe* and *kingdom against kingdom*, carrying the rude effects of discord, to the other extremity of the world. How many places at this very time, are half depopulated by the rage of pestilences? When were there ever known more frequent earthquakes, than our age can number? And if we may believe the daily outcries of the poor of other nations, or our own, lean famine has been shewing at a distance, her meagre, rueful face, in many parts of *Europe*, almost at one time, and only seems to hover in suspense, where to begin the execution of God's angry justice.

If then we join all these great signs together and compare them with the caution Christ has given us, what can we do less than conclude, that the judgment of God is at hand, and probably nigh enough for some of us present, to be living witnesses to.

Ah! Christians, if you were sure that this would be your case how would you not endeavour to pre-

pare yourselves for the approach of that tremendous period! Ought you not then to use the same endeavours since you have no certainty that it will not be so? But whether it be so or not this you are sure of, that you must rise to meet the terrors of it, and therefore it highly behoves you to stand in readiness for it, as much as those unhappy mortals who are reserved to struggle with those terrors in their mortal flesh. Your present preparation for the coming of your Lord, will not advance your fears one minute nearer, but they will help to guard you from the evils which you'll fear, by moving at a distance from you the wretched causes of them, sin and error. Your putting off your preparation will not put off the evil day, for but one single moment. But if you wisely use the summer of the present time, the happy opportunity and means which now are given you of working your salvation, then shall the winter of the world have no evils for you: Your present works shall follow you and help you to go through it with peace and safety, and that dread *Sabbath* which shall put an end to time, on which all farther labours will be vain, will be too late, shall prove a day of rest to you.

Be wise then, Christians: *Pray that your flight be not in winter or on the Sabbath*. And that your prayers may prove effectual, add watching to your prayers. Stand on your guard against the approach of sin and error, that you may be in constant readiness for this second coming of your Lord, which may so probably be brought to pass in your own time of life. *For when you shall see these things*, says Christ, *know ye that it is nigh even at the doors*. And if it should be too remote for you to see in the flesh, yet if you are prepared for this great scrutiny, you will be equally in readiness, for that particular judgment, which every-one must pass, who dies before it. One preparation then will serve for either, and will secure you from the dreadful evils, which both may be attended with to ~~stomach~~ Christians. O thou great awful judge, who hitherto has't proved a tender Saviour to us, vouchsafe to be our Saviour still, exert thy efficacious grace in our behalfs, and rouse us from the lethargy of spiritual sloth; cloath us with faith and charity, and keep us in perpetual readiness for thy approach, that when thou comest all-bright and glorious, to put a period to this world of strife, strengthen'd with solid hope, and cloath'd with fortitude, we may run forth with joy to meet thee, and lose the terrors of an awful judge, in the majestic countenance of thee, our still all-gracious Jesus. Which, &c. *In the name, &c.*

AP 53

A P P E N D I X
TO THE
S E R M O N S

FOR EVERY

SUNDAY in the YEAR.

CONTAINING SOME

A V U L S E S E R M O N S.

By the Same A U T H O R.



D U B L I N:

Printed in the YEAR MDCC LXIII.

ETERNAL MISERY the necessary Consequence of INFINIT
MERCY abused.

S E R M O N



Proving the PROPER ETERNITY of the

TORMENTS of HELL.

Printed, for the first time, separately, in the Year MDCCXL (with a Preface prefix'd to it, which was occasion'd by an extraordinary Piece of the celebrated Mr. William Whiston, M. A. Divine of the Church of England, published while this Sermon was actually in the Press, and some few Days before it's first Publication.) now again printed a fourth time and here annex'd, together with the above-mention'd Preface.



T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE following Sermon was intirely finish'd, and actually in the press, as it now stands, some days before the coming out of Mr. *Whiston's* odd medley of quotations. Nevertheless, if I had found any thing, in that extraordinary piece, worthy a special attention; I wou'd have been at the pains of inserting it in the body of my discourse. But, upon the nicest perusal, I have been able to pick nothing out of it, which could deserve such a compliment. The texts are so jumbled, and often so foreign; the remarks so trivial, and little to the purpose; and the whole is so puff'd, with affectation of learning, and, yet so very empty of the reality; that I should not think it worth the least notice, but, for that regard I owe, and shall always be careful to pay, to the public in general.

Had this gentleman been as sincerely fond of truth, and as much in earnest, about clearing up the important doctrine concerning the *eternal duration of future punishments*, as he pretends to be; he would have search'd to the bottom, and not been content to play and loiter about the surface of it, without once attempting to go any deeper. To place this matter in a full obvious and decisive light, he should have consider'd the divine principles on which it is essentially built, as *infinite mercy, infinite justice, immutable truth*, and their *inseparable relations* to one another in God; the *covenant* which the ALMIGHTY graciously enter'd into with his creature, and the *means, free-will and grace*, he afforded the creature to fulfill that covenant; the *infinite benevolence, insolence and obstinacy* of the creature in breaking it, offending infinite justice, and rejecting infinite mercy; the *infinite satisfaction* due to *infinite offences*, as compared with the *limited nature of the offender*, &c. All these are points, on the consideration of which essentially depends the decision of the doctrine in question; and the want of weighing which with all the deliberation that is necessary has caused some letter-lull'd divines to split upon the rock of error in the very noon-light of evidence.

But then to take so many profound subjects into consideration, and to talk of them coherently, is a laborious task, requires a good deal of study, some real learning, and no small knowledge of di-

vinity. It is more easy, sooner done, and makes a much greater shew of learning, in the eyes of the illiterate vulgar, to huddle together, by the help of a concordance, however confusedly, an ill-pick'd heap of incongruous texts, and wire-draw them to the end proposed, by these unanswerable arguments: ---- *perhaps* ---- *it seems* ---- *I imagin* ---- *I suppose* ---- *I believe* ---- *I fancy* ---- *I ascribe* ---- *I take it* ---- and such like conjectural demonstrations. And that is the very method the voluminous Mr. *Whiston* has thought the most proper to make use of, throughout his treatise against the proper *eternity* of the *future punishments* of the *wicked*. He has, it must be own'd, been lavish enough of scripture; but what method has he observed in quoting it? Why truly, none at all. He has given us some texts, proving the *eternity* of God's *mercy*, which no believer in God can dispute; and these he has writted to prove that the *future punishments* of the *wicked* cannot be *eternal*. Others he has brought, which assert *that eternity* in as express terms as can be made use of; and these he impotently labours to quibble away with an idle chicanery, on the import of the words in *Greek*, of which he has given us, a few instances; and one in *Hebrew*, which he has had the modesty to give us in Italic characters. But the much greater part of the Texts, he has so liberally bestow'd upon us, he might as well have appropriated to a treatise against the Blessed Trinity. However, he has made shift to tack them to the rest, and wrest them alike to his merciless purpose, by the help of such childish remarks, and pueril conjectures, as would be inexcusable in any man of sense, who was not of his years.

To come to a perfect knowledge of reveal'd truths, it is, without doubt, absolutely necessary to recur to that sacred repository of divine revelations, the HOLY SCRIPTURES. But still to obtain any light from the sacred mysteries there enshrined, 'tis essentially necessary also, in reading them, to keep always in view the divine attributes of that eternal sovereign truth who dictated them; and to eye those attributes abstracted from all the imperfections which our groveling conception is apt to vest them with. This is one means indispensably re-

quisit, towards a right understanding of Holy Writ, especially where texts seem to contradict one another. And without this means, it will be totally impossible to reconcile any seemingly opposite terms of expression we there meet with: On the contrary, we must lie open to the most wretched inevitable confusion.

Indeed the laborious gentleman above-mention'd, to make some amends for his deficiency, in so material a point, has given us a slip-knotted string of authors, some of credit, and some of none, as a support to his odd conjectures, and has been absent enough, to think them to his purpose. What is very singular, and quite in his own way, is the method he has observed in doing this. Those venerable fathers, whose authority against him, all his artifice could not elude, he has been pleas'd very modestly, to pass over un-noticed, or to brand with the title of heretic; and such avow'd heretics, as chime with him in his errors, he has most generously promoted to the dignity of Fathers. By the authority of such as these, he has apocryphised many texts of authentic scripture, and by his own undisputed authority, has swell'd the sacred Code with apocryphal, and even spurious writings. Where an author of venerable authority can, however forcibly, be distorted to serve a turn, he is mention'd with respect; and where he is too plain, for the most baselined confidence to pervert, or elude, we are told, he is corrupted by interpolations, and therefore not to be depended upon; or else that what he says, is a *philosophic romance*, or a *poetic flight*, and consequently of little weight: And yet when occasion serves again, the philosophic fables of a heathen, are to be the received plan of a Christian system; and *Homer* and *Virgil* are orthodox divines.

But what is more curious still, is, that this gentleman's fondness for the idol of his own brain, his new fangled *adæ*, *Hades*, has induced him to make use of those very passages, in the ancient Roman-Catholic writers, in which they are manifestly arguing for a purgatory, as so many authorities for his chimerical intermediate state; tho' it is self-evident, that the one system has nothing in common with the other. However, some authorities must be produced to countenance a fiction, which otherwise cou'd not be swallow'd by the grossest ignorance; and therefore all plunder is lawful prize to a man, who is determin'd upon gaining his point at any rate; or appearing at least to do so, with such credulous readers, as take upon trust, what they either have not leisure, or want opportunity of examining farther into.

Another artifice this author seems to triumph much in, is, a sophistic affectation of reasoning away the doctrine in question, by the very similes

made use of in scripture to explain it, such as that of the *Cbaff*, *Matt. iii.* Whence he argues, p. 42: that as the wicked are compared to the *Cbaff*, which is entirely burnt up for it's destruction, it plainly implies that their punishment shall be ended by an utter destruction, or *what we should call annihilation*. But is not this egregious trifling? For besides that every student in philosophy knows that the *Cbaff*, which is burnt up by fire, is not, strictly speaking totally annihilated; but rather corrupted into a different substance; If Mr. *Whiston* mean'd to personate the divine, the philosopher, or the man of letters, he should have remember'd that for parities, comparisons, or similes to be good and just, it is by no means material for them, to run parallel in every circumstantial particular, but in such only as they are brought to express. Thus St. *John Baptist*, to give some express idea of the torments destin'd for the wicked, compares their persons to the *Cbaff*: and as long as the parity gives the analogy between both, with regard to their being the destin'd fuel of fire; it matters little, whether there is any farther analogy in it, or not; The parity is strictly just in the particular it was used to express, and that is sufficient. But----- to conclude, because they are analogous with regard to the circumstance of burning, that therefore they must be so too, with regard to the length of their duration, is such reasoning as may be tolerated in a man while he is dreaming, but will by no means bear telling when he awakes. For a proof of this I shall content myself with bringing one instance out of *Esdras*, as quoted by this gentleman: *As the heavens, says Esdras, are bigger than the earth, so are his (God's) ways bigger than ours.* Now would it not set this gentleman o' yawning, should any man tell him with a grave face: "Lately, in my sleep, methought in reading the fourth of *Esdras*, I found out that the distance between our ways and those of God, is not absolutely infinit; for that distance is compared only to the space between heaven and earth, which cannot possibly be infinit?" However Mr. *Whiston* might excuse the dreamer, I fancy he would hardly, if perfectly awake himself, take such a dream for a rational argument. But I have dwelt longer on this subject, than the weight of it deserves; and I should think myself blameable for so doing; if reasonings, like these, did not make up most of the weightiest arguments in that author's animadversions.

The two main pillars, however, on which he builds his whole sophistic machinery, are ---- First, that the words *עולם*, *Olam* in Hebrew, and *Αἰών*, *Aion*, in the Greek, do by no means signify a co-eternity with God: Second, that St. *John*, in the *Apocalypse*, calls the damnation of the wicked, a

second

second death. But, on how quick-sanded a bottom these principles are grounded, will best appear from examining them separately.

First then ----- it is very true, that these words do not strictly import a *Co-eternity* with GOD, in any of his creatures: For *Co-eternity*, in the true sense of the word, signifies a duration equal with that of GOD, as well *a parte ante* or *anteriorly*, as *a parte post* or *for the future*: Which is probably the reason why no word is ever made use of, in the sacred scripture, liable to such an interpretation, where creatures are spoken of: And this may serve for an answer to his trivial remark, p. 97. as far as it relates to hell-torments. For as to his unpious hint, with regard to the antiquity of the Son of GOD, it is foreign to the present purpose to take any notice of it; especially as I design hereafter to treat that matter at large. It is nothing better than a mere quibble of Mr. *Whiston's*, to pretend that the terms, *Olam* and *Aion*, were ever taken by any in a *co-eternal* sense. For such divines and Fathers, as have made use of the word *co-eternal*, have applied it only in a limited improper sense, as signifying a duration equal to that of GOD, merely *a parte post*, or *posteriorly*. But this is too trite a remark among the truly learned, to need insisting on any farther.

It is equally true, that those words do sometimes mean no more than *an age*, or sometimes a *limited*, or sometimes an *undetermin'd duration*. But it is absolutely inconsistent with truth to say, that they never naturally and strictly signify an *endless, eternal, properly eternal duration, a parte post, or for the future*, even when applied to creatures.

The natural sense then of the above-mention'd words in dispute, is ----- the utmost duration of the persons or things, they are spoken of, or appropriated to. Thus, when they are spoken of things, in their nature, of a limited duration; they signify nothing more, than that they shall last for as *durable an age* as their perishable existence will admit of: But when they are applied to GOD, or to such of his creatures as are immortal in an essential part of their substance, they absolutely import an endless duration. And that this latter is the natural true import of the words in question, is evident from the very etymon of the Greek *Αἰών*, *Aion*, which is *Au, Aei, SEMPER, forever*, and the root of the Hebrew *עולם*, *Olam*, which is *עלם*, *Elem*, and signifies *ABSCONDITUM, INVESTIGABLE,, bidden or unsearchable*, and whence is form'd *עולם*, *Olam*, *SEculum æternum*, an *endless age*, or a duration, as it were, hidden and unsearchable in it's beginning, and end: An elegance peculiar to the Hebrew language.

Now to know for certain when the words *עולם*, *Olam*, and *Αἰών*, *Aion*, or their derivatives, import an *eternal duration*, or only a limited one; we are

to examin into the nature of the beings they are applied to. If it be such as requires their existence to cease, they must mean nothing more than an age, or a *very lasting duration*: But, if it is essentially indefectible, as that of the Divine Being is *PER SE, of itself*, and all intellectual beings are *PER IPSUM, by him*; then they must naturally imply an endless, eternal, *properly eternal* existence. Thus, where they are applied to the ceremonial laws of the *Jews*; it is evident, they can mean nothing more than that those laws should have existence till the coming of Christ, and no longer: At which time they were essentially to cease, and give way to the more glorious dispensation of the law of grace. So when spoken of the servitude of *Gentil* inhabitants among the *Jews*; they can signify only a continual bondage during their natural life. But when they are made use of to signify the duration of GOD's divine attributes, or the existence of his intellectual creatures in a future state; they must signify an *eternal, properly eternal* lastingness: Both being equally immortal and indefectible by nature, *a parte post, or futurely*; with this difference only, that the *ONE* is so *PER SE, of himself*, the others *PER ALIUM, from another*.

And this rule, if carefully attended to by *Hebrew* and *Greek* readers of holy writ, will serve them as a sure and safe key to find the true sense of the above-mention'd words, where-ever they meet with them throughout the whole sacred Code.

But, to return to our subject, that mankind are *eternal beings, properly eternal, A PARTE POST, that is*, with regard to their *future state*, but especially the Blessed (and why they are so) *David* tells us in Psalm cxii. *יְהוָה צְדִיק כִּי-לֹעָלָם לֹא יִמָּוֵט* *וְיִזְכָּר עוֹלָם*. *Ὅτι ὡς τοὶ αἰῶνα ἢ σαλευθήσονται, ὡς μετακινήσονται αἰῶνες ἵνα εἰ δίκαιος.* *QUIA NON COMMOTEBITUR IN SEculum, IN MEMORIA æTERNA ERIT JUSTUS.* *Because* (says *David*) *he will not be moved* (or disturb'd) *in any Age*, therefore the *just man shall be in eternal memory*. So that the blessed, at least, according to the royal Prophet, must be *eternal*; and that, because he is immovable, and not to be disturb'd by defection or annihilation, which surely is the worst of disturbance. Nor is he only indefectible in a limited sense, but not to be moved *in any age*, as the strict literal translation imports and must import. For there needs no great share of philosophy to know, that *Negatio est malignantis natura*, is one of the first principles in logic. *A negation is malignant in it's nature*, and destroys all, which it affects: And as the negation here affects the whole phrase, it must necessarily destroy not only all commotion, or disturbance, in the just man, but every age, or period, in which it can be supposed possible.

It is very worthy to be remark'd too, that the very

very same terms **עולם**, *Leolam*, and **עליון**, *Eis ton aionā*, **עלם**, *Olam*, and **איוון**, *Aionion*, which are equally used in this text, to signify both an age and eternity, with regard to created beings, are equally applied in innumerable places of the Holy Scripture to the duration of the Divine Being. So, that granting, that the word **συναϊδος**, *SYNAIDIOS* be never used to signify the duration of any created being, what can this Gentleman infer to his purpose? It is self-evident, that the very terms above-mention'd, so often used in Scripture to express the utmost duration of creatures, are very commonly also used there to express the duration of God's attributes: Which would be highly derogatory to his infinit greatness; were not the words naturally significative of an eternity properly such. I shall content myself, for brevity's sake, with giving one instance in a kind, and then take leave of this piddling topic.

In the xxvth. of *Leviticus*, the law for bondsmen runs thus: **לעלם והתנחלתם אתם לגניכם** *Kai katameriste autēis tois teknois hman meō umas, h isōnai umn katōchmoi eis ton aionā.* **ET HEREDITATE TRANSMITTETIS ILLOS AD POSTEROS ET POSSIDEBITIS IN ÆTERNUM** (*sive IN SECULUM.*) And ye shall transfer them to your children, and shall possess them forever, (or to an age.) Concerning the ineffable attribute of God's immutable truth, *David*, in Psalm cxvii. 2. says: **לעלם יאה ואמת יאה** *Kai h alētheia to kuris menei eis ton aionā.* **ET VERITAS JEHOVÆ seu DOMINI MANET IN ÆTERNUM** (*sive IN SECULUM.*) And the truth of the Lord remains forever (or to an age.) Surely, an age must here mean an age of eternity? But let us proceed. The same royal prophet, in Psalm cxix. 98. uses again the same expression concerning the divine law: **כי לעלם היא** *כי היא לעלם* *QUA IN ÆTERNUM MIHI (vel MEUM) EST.* Because it is ever before me (or mine). In Psalm cxii. above quoted, we see he has appropriated the same terms to the duration of the blessed. And *Jeremiab*, in his xxxiii. chap. ver. ult. speaking of the wicked; does the same. His words are remarkably expressive: **חַרְפּוֹ עוֹלָם וְכִלְמוֹת עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִשְׁכַּח וְנִתְּנָה עֲלֵיכֶם** *Kai dōso ep mas onidhomen aionon, h atimiai aionion htiis ouk epilēthēitai.* **ET DABO SUPER VOS OPPROBRIUM SEMPER IN ÆTERNUM ET IGNOMINIAM ÆTERNAM QUÆ NUNQUAM OBLIVIONE DELEBITUR.** And I will bring upon you an everlasting reproach, and an eternal shame, which shall never be forgotten (or shall never be effaced by oblivion.) Must it not then be properly eternal?

I might bring innumerable other texts of this sort; If I cared to be as prolix as the long-winded *Mr. Whiston*: But those I have already produced, are sufficient to prove what I have advanced, and to shew how wretchedly low, as well as idle and un-

doctrinal, are the page-swelling quibbles, about mere words, with which that gentleman has been pleased to bloat his last production. But it is time to examin the second grand pillar of support to his mighty battery against the proper Eternity of hell torments.

I could hardly have expected that a man, whose indefatigable drudgery, in poring over the monuments of learned antiquity, should, methinks, entitle him to some thought, wou'd have been absent enough, to reason so very impertinently on so plain a text: But it is no new thing for some men to be dazzled out of evidence by the too open light it appears in. What can be more plain, than that the perdition of the wicked is both a second death, and an eternal one? What is the first death, but a separation of the soul from the body, which, notwithstanding, is perfectly consistent, according to *Mr. Whiston's* own scheme, with the actual existence of the soul? So the second death is a real separation] from God, of both body and soul, which is likewise perfectly consistent with a farther duration of this being, even according to the same gentleman's opinion and favourit hypothesis. For *Mr. Whiston* don't himself pretend that the wicked shall immediately be annihilated at the general judgment, when this second death is to be inflicted; but positively avows, that they shall be tormented for a considerable time after. So that having allow'd this second death, to be consistent with a life capable of suffering, and suffering grievously; it must be own'd an egregious forgetfulness in this gentleman, in the same breath to wrest that second death to an utter dissolution of soul and body, in the strictest sense, as he must mean: For otherwise he concludes nothing, and means nothing.

It is plain then that *Mr. Whiston*, without perceiving it, is forced to own, in the very act of denial, that the second death is, strictly speaking, a state of life. But then he denies it to be eternal life, or to be in perpetual punishments. This opinion of his, he tells us, is more reasonable: But for reasons he gives us none, and has none to give. That this life of punishment, which the gentleman himself, as I have observed, undesignedly acknowledges to be consistent with the second more dreadful Death, is strictly such; we have it from our Saviour, who puts the resurrection of the wicked and of the good, from the first death, upon the same footings, with regard to their being a resurrection to Existence: But calls the one a resurrection to life eternal, the other to fire eternal. *St. PAUL* is very clear upon this head, and positively tells us, that in the great day, the dead shall be raised incorruptible. Nay ---- he positively says, that our corruption must be put on incorruption, and our mortal must put on immortality. So that, on one hand, the

the condemnation of the wicked plainly appears to be what St. *John* calls it, a *second death*, inasmuch as it is an absolute separation from the only true life, from the presence of GOD, and the glory of his power: And, on the other hand, the incorruptibility, immortality, and indefectibility of their nature, will make that separation a *natural state of life in perpetual misery*. Which may well indeed be call'd *death*, (and is the worst of deaths) in opposition to that *eternal life*, that only life worth contending for, which he *who overcometh*, shall be crown'd with; and which shall be a perpetual guarantee to him from any *second death*, or separation from GOD.

I shall take no notice of the many self-contradictions, and gross absurdities, which have so largely contributed to the bulk of the piece before me, such as in p. 47, 53, 62, 63, and particularly in p. 64, where he most inimitably finds out, that no such being as we are shall be strictly co-eternal with GOD *a parte post*, or *futurely*; and yet that the praises of GOD shall be sung by the righteous for *indefectible endless ages of ages*, and p. 72, 81. and those extravagant ones, p. 85, 98, onward, p. 104, and those p. 107, &c. which last must certainly be owing to some weakness in that gentleman's eyes, not suffering him to read any more of the texts than the scraps he there quotes. Much less shall I make any remarks on the pretty inconsistency of taking the *unquenchable fire*, and the *worm which never dies*, in a literal sense, in p. 109. and yet denying the immortality of the soul in p. 72. and the equality of it's duration *a parte post*, or *posteriorly*, with GOD in p. 64. To set these, and many others in that piece, in the truly ridiculous light they deserve, would be the task of a volume rather than of a preface. And as I shall hereafter, when leisure permits me, treat fully the sacred doctrines, relating to the immortality of the soul, and the divinity of the Son of GOD, which the gentleman so rashly blasphemes; I shall say nothing of the latter here, nor any thing more concerning the former: Especially since they are not absolutely pertinent to the present subject. Whatever else in that curious work may seem to the unletter'd part of my readers to deserve solution, is already fully answer'd in the body of my sermon.

It might be expected that I should quote those venerable Fathers and Writers of antiquity, whom Mr. *Whiston* had the modesty not to confute his own work with; and, if it was necessary, I could do it. I could quote a St. AUGUSTIN, l. 21. *de Civitate Dei*, c. 17. *Enchirid.* c. 112, & *contra Prisc.*

& *Orig.* ---- a St. GREGORY, l. 4. *Dialog.* & 9. *Moral.* ---- a St. ISIDORE *de summo bono* ---- a St. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homil.* 24, 50. in *Mat.* ---- a St. HILARIUS, in *Psal.* 1. and many others. But besides that, this would swell a confutation of him to a voluminous size, it would have no power to confound him. For I have no reason to expect, that these Fathers would fare any better with him than St. CLEMENT, LACTANTIUS, TERTULLIAN, St. CYPRIAN, and others, whom he has the inimitable courage to quote, and then to assure us, without being out of countenance, that they did not themselves believe a word of what they advanced: And this he demonstrates from a convincing argument, that he himself cannot believe they were in earnest. For it is observable, that there are no divines, or fathers, so serious and sincere, so truly wise and learned, so very good and zealous for the safety of souls, as this gentleman, if you will take his own word for it. And this, perhaps, is one reason, why he is so extremely fond of quoting himself.

Tho' if I may be ingenuous without offending; I will even own, that it is a shrewd mark with me of a bad scholar, as well as an indifferent writer, when I find an author railing against all who do not agree with him in sentiments, for ignorant fools; as it is of a bad physician, a bad divine, or a bad man, to hear the one call the rest of the faculty, asses; the other treat his brethren like blockheads; and the third brand his neighbours with the character of knaves.

I do not mean to make any applications: And yet I can by no means conceal that this is a method very much made use of by that gentleman. Whereas it would have been abundantly more satisfactory to his readers, had he laid aside his compliments to himself, and imputations of ignorance to others; and instead of quibbling about scripture, enter'd more deeply into the subject he pretended to controvert: If he is convinced of what he attempts to prove; why did he not afford us one argument of solidity, or at least the appearance of one, to convince us? But this, I dare boldly say, he has nowhere done throughout his whole very laborious essay: Tho' I must at the same time do him the justice to observe, that his neglect is not so much to be imputed to want of will, as to want of power.

I shall now dismiss this gentleman, with the sincerest wishes a Christian can make, that he may not be brought to the fatal conviction of his present error, with regard to the subject in question, and be reduced to own it, to his sorrow, when too late.

S E R M O N

On the ETERNITY of the TORMENTS of HELL.

PSALM LXII. 12.

Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: FOR thou renderest to every man according to his work.

TO render to every man according to his work, is a very equitable thing: To pay a good servant the wages due to him for his service, according to covenant, is but right: And to punish an unfaithful servant, in proportion to the breach of his part of the covenant between him and his master, is equally right. To insist upon payment of the utmost farthing due from an ill principled debtor, whom we have found to be able, but unwilling to pay what he owes, is an act of justice, which no one can condemn; Especially if the debtor himself is an inexorable creditor, to such of his unhappy debtors as are wishful, but unable, to answer his demands.

So far then God is irreproachable in his conduct towards his creatures, as, in consequence of his covenant with them, he rewards with eternal life the good; *that is*, those who love him and keep his commandments; *that is*, those who fulfil their part of the covenant ----- *active affection*, and *upright action*. For tho', when they have done all, they may and must say, *they are but useless servants*, with respect to him; yet in virtue of God's ineffable promise they earn merit, and thro' his grace, become intitled to, the stipulated recompence of eternal bliss; which God's *eternal truth* lays him under a gracious, but indispensable, obligation of conferring.

In like manner, when God punishes the wicked, *that is*, those who do not keep his commandments, and consequently either do not love him, or love him only with a *lifeless, fruitless, inactive affection*, and punishes them in proportion to the breach of their part of the covenant he made with them (whether that proportion requires the punishment to be eternal, or only temporal;) he is irreproachable in inflicting it. This is more especially self-evident with regard to that merciless part of the creation, who are inflexibly rigorous to their fellow-creatures.

Tho' God could have created such a being as man, without laying him under any positive restrictions; and in such case that being could not have

been guilty of any punishment, but what he incurred by violation of the laws of nature founded on eternal truth; yet as it was at God's disposal, to lay what restrictions he pleased on the beings he was pleased to create, and as he actually did lay restrictions upon them, with a promise of reward for their compliance, and of punishment for their disobedience, every wilful breach of that covenant, deserves a punishment proportion'd to the greatness or littleness of such breach: And God is strictly justifiable in inflicting it. Whence it appears, that God is equally just, as well in the punishments he inflicts on the wicked, as in the recompense he bestows on the good; Both being the wages due to their several works, according to the covenant made with them.

But where is the mercy in either? Is a man merciful in paying his servants the wages he bargain'd with them for; when once they have faithfully discharged their duty? No. They have a right to demand them: He is just to a nicety, but not merciful. When an honest man compels by imprisonment a reluctant debtor to pay the last farthing of a debt he is able to discharge; can his rigor be called mercy? No. He is irreproachably just, but in no sense merciful. And yet in my text, the sacred writer attributes *Mercy* to God, for this very reason: BECAUSE he renders to every man according to his work, that is, *eternal happiness* to the good; *eternal misery* to the wicked. *Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; FOR thou renderest to every man according to his work.* That it is justice in God, to punish and punish severely the breaches of his laws, we can easily comprehend; and that to afford the transgressors any means of escaping the severity of his justice, is mercy, we can as easily conceive. But why should their punishments be eternal? Or, if they are; how shall *eternal rigor* be reconciled with *eternal mercy*?

Why shall the punishments of impenitent sinners be eternal? Because a *false balance* is abomination to the Lord? But a *just weight* is his delight. * How shall the *Eternity* of God's *justice* inflict those eternal punishments, without prejudice to his infinite mercy? In a most equitable manner, inasmuch as mer-

* Prov. xi. 1.

ty and truth shall go (inseparably) before thy face, O Lord! ---- God could not be just; if hell torments, the punishments of the wicked, were not eternal: And these cannot be eternal; unless God is as merciful, as he is just in inflicting them. This I shall undertake to set in a clear light, by separating truth from it's appearances, in the following discourse, in which

I. I shall prove the consistency of this doctrine from scripture; as well according to the evidence of the words, as to the sense they are taken in by the fathers.

II. I shall shew it's conformity with right reason, from the nature of the Infinite offended, of the finite offender, and of the infinit satisfaction due to the former from the latter.

III. I shall answer the most important objections that can be offer'd against this fundamental point of faith; and conclude the whole with some moral reflections.

" O GOD of all power justice truth and mercy!
 " O GOD, who did'st with such disinterested generosity create us thy useless servants to be forever infinitely happy with and in thee: And who, to enable us to become in our own right thus happy, would'st condescend to lift us to the power of strictly meriting and earning the wages of eternal life, by graciously entering into an ineffable covenant with us, which we had no original claim to! Give us thy efficacious aid to fulfill the part which appertains to us: For thou, we are sure, wilt never fail to do all which depends on thee. We thank thee for the excess of love with which thou invite'st us to a share of thy own glory, by making it the recompense of our otherwise unprofitable services. We praise thee for being kindly pleased to bias us to deserve that glorious recompense; by adding to thy bounteous invitations thy attracting co-operating grace. And more, we glorify thee for that, with farther kindness still, in order to encrease the powerful bias, thou mercifully deignest to deter us from neglecting to secure the endless bliss preparing for us; by allotting those endless tortures, which must attend so senseless a neglect. Oh then! Since thou has't done for us thus much; unweariedly continue to watch over us with thy paternal eye. Enlighten our minds and fortify our hearts to make a wise, a faithful use of the free-will and grace thou has't given us towards a prudent choice: That we discreetly may prefer the desirable justice of thy merciful rewards in Heaven, to the dreadful mercy of thy equitable punishments in the abyss

* Psalm lxxxix. 14.

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" of hell; and not urge thee to plunge us into a ruin, which must be infinitely miserable and eternally durable, as, by the assistance of thy unalterable truth, I shall now make appear. Oh grant, dear Lord, it be with general fruit!"

IT is not ways material to my present purpose to enquire, where the place is in which the wicked are and shall be tormented after death, nor what are the instruments of their torment. Once we are sure that they must and will be tormented, it avails but little to know, whether the place of their punishment be in the center of the earth, as the scripture in some passages seems to express; or in the air likewise, as from others may be gather'd: Whether the instruments of their torture be literally excess of heat and cold, unutterable darkness, &c. And the fire and brimstone mention'd in holy writ, the same specifically with our fire, and the sulphur we are acquainted with; or whether it shall be of a more spiritualized nature. It is sufficient for us to know, that God, who created the world out of nothing, and governs the whole creation with unlimited power, is capable of providing a proper mansion of horror for such wretches as call upon his justice for punishment; and that the instruments he appoints to torment them with will effectually execute his will. I shall leave therefore these less material enquiries for other occasion, to attend wholly to this more important question, " WHETHER GOD WILL ETERNALLY PUNISH THE IMPENITENT WICKED? ---- AND WHETHER HE CAN BE MERCIFUL IN SO DOING?"

I. If we believe the sacred scripture, and adhere to it's meaning as well according to the evidence of the words as to the sense of the fathers; if we believe it to be the word of God; and believe God's word to be immutably true; we cannot doubt of either.

In the xxxvth. Chapter of JOB, it is said to the wicked: *Because there is wrath, beware lest God take thee away with his stroke: Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.* What can we understand by these words, but the eternal torments which will ensue to impenitent sinners? The meaning of the caution is obvious: It cannot be to guard them against death; for neither wicked nor good can withstand God's stroke in that sense. The meaning then is: *Beware, that is, be prepared by repentance, or in other words, beware lest he take thee away IMPENITENT with his stroke.* And why, but because a great ransom cannot deliver thee? There is no other ransom for great or little wickedness than the death of Christ: If then this

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this great ransom will not deliver the impenitent wicked; he must eternally remain in the slavery of sin he died in, and consequently be eternally wretched. For if there is no ransom, no salvation for him in CHRIST JESUS; neither is there salvation in any other as St. PETER, fill'd with the holy Ghost, said to the Jews in the ivth. of the Acts.

In the same chapter of JOB, a little lower, we are told that GOD is great, and we know him not; neither can the number of his years be search'd out; and five verses lower we are farther told, that by them he judgeth his people. The number of GOD's years, which cannot be found out, is his eternity; and by this ETERNITY he judges his people. And how shall this divine eternity make a just distinction between the good and bad part of his people, but by judging the good to an eternity of bliss, the wicked to an eternity of woe? Wherefore DAVID, in the ninth Psalm, praised GOD for destroying the wicked, and putting out their name for ever and ever.

The same royal psalmist tells us, in the xith. Psalm, that upon the wicked GOD shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and horrible tempest: This shall be the PORTION of their cup. If then this is all the portion allotted to the wicked; this is all they have to expect, and the immortality of their nature fixing them to their lot, they must eternally feed on the bitter, bitter cup of snares, fire, brimstone and horror. And that this is his meaning, the holy monarch expresses more fully in another place, * The Lord, says he, shall take them away in a whirlwind, both living and in his wrath, that is, both living, and living in his wrath, which is eternal. The Hebrew has it more express, as living as his wrath. And consequently as his wrath is eternal, so shall their punishment be.

DAVID, immediately after, to account for this inflexibility of GOD's justice, shews it to be an ineffable effect of his mercy to the good. For the righteous, says he, shall rejoice when he see'th the vengeance. † Whence it plainly appears, that if there were no other good in it: GOD is at least infinitely merciful in decreeing those eternal torments to the wicked, who deserve them, to enhance the felicity of the good, who must doubly rejoice in their own happiness, at the sight of what the wicked endure. Not that their joy proceeds from any cruel satisfaction, or pleasure; in seeing those wretches tormented; but from the comparison of the infinit bliss, they eternally enjoy, with the eternal misery they have happily escaped; and from the clearer sight which that comparison gives them of GOD's justice and mercy. For the real value of every thing is best known by closely comparing it

with it's opposit. And therefore the inspired monarch seems to insinuate in the same Psalm, that the good in reality wou'd not be fully sensible of their eternal happiness, but for this comparison of it with the eternal wretchedness of the wicked, which spirits them up to that extatic acknowledgment of GOD's goodness: Verily there is a reward for the righteous, Verily there is a GOD, who judgeth on the earth. *

Well then might DAVID soon after in raptures apostrophize GOD in the words of my text: "Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: For thou renderest to every man according to his work."

Thus far, Christians, we have heard the sentiments of inspired DAVID. Now let us listen to him in the intervals, when inspiration forsook him. DAVID, when left to himself, was no more capable than we are, of ourselves, to reconcile the for-ever of GOD's justice in punishing the wicked, with the infinity of his mercy. "I remember'd GOD † and was troubled: I complain'd, and my spirit was overwhelm'd. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with my own heart, and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast-off for-ever? And will he be favourable no more?" Is HIS MERCY CLEAN-GONE FOR-EVER? DOth HIS PROMISE FAIL FOR-EVERMORE? Hath GOD forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? What more could be said by the declaimers against the eternity of hell torments? Why don't the miscreants quote this for an authority? DAVID first calls the mercy of GOD in question: Is his mercy clean gone for-ever? And as one abyss calls on another, he presently doubts of his justice and truth: Doth his promise fail for evermore? A rare passage for them to apply to their purpose of overthrowing the ineffable attributes of GOD? Why should they blush to bring this text, who are not ashamed to pervert others much less to their purpose? Or why indeed shou'd they blush at any thing, who blush not to blaspheme GOD from his throne, to give vice a greater authority than it already has? But will this give you a right (O enemies of truth) to the title of merciful, which you are pleased to compliment yourselves with? "It is unmerciful, you say, for GOD to give sinners their desert." Is it mercy then for worms, for wretches, for wicked sinners, to rob GOD of his due? And must GOD be made more merciful than becomes him as GOD to be, merely to prove him less just than he really is, and must be? Oh age! Oh manners! How true is that of SOLOMON; † The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel!

But where is the wonder that men, enslaved by their unruly passions, and made feeble by long ha-

* Psalm. lviii.

כָּרַם יְבוֹא מִן הַבַּיִת בְּמֶלֶךְ חַיִּים

† Ibid.

* Ibid. † Psalm. lxxvii ‡ Prov. xii. 10.

bits of vice, shou'd be able to reason no better; when *David*, a virtuous man, a man after God's own heart, was liable to the same infirmity, when left to himself and to the weakness of his own understanding? But the good have still this advantage above the wicked; that, tho', like these, they are liable, by the frailty of their nature, to fall into error and scepticism; yet the readiness, with which they captivate their sense to the lights of faith, enables them to rise again to a clearer knowledge of God's eternal truth. In fact, the same *David*, who was mistaken by night, retracts his nightly errors in the day; and, by the help of fresh inspiration, is enabled to reconcile God's casting off the wicked for-ever, with the continuance of his mercy, and the truth of his promise. * *I said*, continues the royal prophet, *this is my infirmity: But I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high*. Thus the inspired *David* is by the light of grace lifted to see thro' the weakness of his natural reason and enabled to account for God's casting off the wicked FOR-EVER, by reflecting on the years of the right hand of God, that is, the eternity of his justice; that eternity by which, as we have seen in *Job*, he is to judge his people. And the same revelation which illumin'd the royal prophet to see into the divine justice in casting-off the wicked for-ever, enabled him in like manner to reconcile that justice with his infinit mercy, by recollecting the many wonders he had wrought to deter those wretches from incurring eternal torments, before his inflicting them; as well as the innumerable proofs of his goodness, by which he endeavour'd to win them to an eternity of happiness. "Thou art the God who do'st wonders," says he: † thou has't declared thy strength amongst the people. Thou has't with thine arm redeem'd thy people. — The voice of thy thunder was in the Heaven. — The earth trembled and shook. Thou led'st thy people like a flock, by the hand of *Moses* and *Aaron*. "What more could a merciful God do to win mankind from the eternal torments he threaten'd to the wicked, than to shew them his goodness in redeeming them from sin, conducting them as a tender pastor does his flock, and appointing them teachers to instruct them in his will, and in the means to execute it? What more could he do to deter them, than declare his strength to them, and demonstrate his punishing power in the voice of his thunder? And what less cou'd he do as a just God, than eternally punish those obstinate wretches who wou'd neither be won nor deterr'd from the eternal punishments he threaten'd them with? Must his truth fail, or his mercy be destroy'd? Cannot they, nay must not they, eternally subsist toge-

* *Prov.* xii. 10. † *Ibid.*

ther? Yes, O Lord! Yes, says *David* * "justice and judgment are the habitation of thy Throne? mercy and truth shall (*inseparably*) go before thy face." True indeed it is, that thou art merciful, infinitely merciful in the go very "casting-off the wicked for-ever. *Because* "thou Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and "plenteous in mercy unto all them who call upon thee." † But then thy being merciful hinders thee not from being just to such as despise thy forgiveness, and neglect to call upon thee. For as thy mercy is everlasting, so thy truth endureth to all generations. ‡

Wherefore, says God, by the mouth of his prophet *ISAIAH*, || "Do not deceive yourselves, O mortals; nor think to elude the eternal rigour of my everlasting justice, by trusting to my mercy in the midst of your wickedness. "I am merciful: But am equally just. And "there is no God else beside me, a just God and "a Saviour." There is no God who is a Saviour only, and not at the same time a just God. For such a being could not be God. They, who vainly imagin so, are a people of no understanding: That is, a people whose understanding is corrupted by a perversity of heart. And § therefore, says the same prophet, "He who made them, will "have no mercy on them; and he who form'd "them will shew them no favour." If then God will shew no mercy, no favour to the impenitent wicked; is it not plain that they must be eternally wretched? Yet this no ways proves him to be absolutely unmerciful. No, enough it is for his mercy, that, while they were fit objects of it, he shew'd it to them, by being, as the prophet *NAHUM* tells us, ** as slow to anger as he was great in power. The greatness of his power was such, that he might have justly punish'd the wicked, and doom'd them to feel the eternal rigour of his justice ere they compleated their crimes, and that without injury to his mercy. How gracious then must not he be to wait so long for their repentance, and how great does not his mercy appear in the slowness of his anger! And ought not his justice then to shine as great in an eternal inflexibility towards those wretches, whom no patience could gair, and no threats could deter from their inflexible obstinacy in offending him?

Yes, surely, says the prophet *Jeremiah*, the sin of these impenitent sinners is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond. ††; and why, but that it may never be effaced? Nay, God positively says, by the mouth of this same holy writer in the same place, that it never shall be

* *Psalms* lxxxix. 14. † *Psalms* lxxxvi. 5.

‡ *Psalms* c. 5. || *Chap.* xlv. 21. § *Chap.* xvii. 11.

** *Chap.* i. 3. †† *Chap.* xvii.

effaced. Ye have kindled a fire in my anger, which shall burn for-ever. And how could this be, unless sinners, who are the fuel of the fire kindled in God's anger, should for-ever burn in it, without consuming?

This is undoubtedly that *unquenchable, everlasting fire* which God so often speaks of by the mouth of his divine Son, who has left us such repeated assurances of the *eternity* of punishments reserved for the *wicked* as render the disbelief of it absolutely inexcusable. In St. Matthew*, speaking parabolically of the *wicked*, he tells us, that "every tree which bringeth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." And two verses lower, comparing their punishments with the Rewards of the Good, he declares them to be *everlasting*: † "He will gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with *unquenchable fire*." The very same phrase is literally repeated by St. Luke. ‡ And to shew how much more dreadful that Fire is, from the consideration of *eternity*, than any mere temporal smart, he compares it with some of the most acute pains, human nature can be subject to in this life, as may be seen in St. Matthew || but more fully in St. Mark § "If thy hand offend thee cut it off: It is better for thee to enter into life maim'd, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire which *never shall be quenched*; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire which *never shall be quenched*; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee; pluck it out: It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every-one shall be *salted with fire*. The repetitions of the *unquench'd, unquenchable fire*, and of the *worm which dieth not*, are plain indications of the *eternity* of those punishments." A consideration which must make the cutting-off a limb, or plucking out an eye, or any other of the acutest pains of this life, fall infinitely short of those which the reprobate hereafter shall endure in that *unquenchable fire*: which, as our Saviour metaphorically expresses it, instead of consuming them, and putting thus an end to their misery, shall for-ever preserve them to feel it's rigour; as salt is to meat, a preservative from corruption or decay.

In St. Mark,** the same divine oracle assures us, that, "He who shall blaspheme against the Holy-

* Chap. iii. v. 10. † Ver. 12. ‡ Chap. iii. v. 17.

|| Chap. xviii. v. 8, 9. § Chap. ix. from ver. 43, to

49. ** Chap. iii. v. 29.

"Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of *eternal damnation*." If he *bathe never forgiveness*; how shall he ever be happy with God? Or how shall an immortalized being never be happy with God; and yet not be for-ever miserable without him? If the unmerciful pleaders for unjust mercy should answer, that "He, who is only in danger of *eternal damnation*, cannot be actually in it: "And therefore, as the greatest of crimes is threatened only with the Danger, the Reality cannot be any-one's lot;" let me beg leave to reply, that, if there is a *danger of eternal damnation*; there must also be an *eternal damnation in fact*: Since it is impossible to be in danger of what has *no Being*.

In the gospel of St. LUKE, * our Saviour makes Abraham tell the rich man in Hell: "Between us and you there is a great gulf fix'd; so that they who would pass hence to you, cannot: Neither can they pass to us, who would come from thence." If the wicked then never can pass the gulph fix'd between them and the good, nor receive any consoling visits from them; must they not remain *eternally* in their misery, spite of all their vain efforts and wishes? --- Again,

In St. MATTHEW, † Christ expressly compares the *wicked* to the *bad fish*, which, after the *good* are put-up into vessels, are thrown away. So, adds he --- *the angels shall sever the wicked*; that is, throw them away like *bad fish*, not laid aside to be afterwards made use of, but *thrown away forever*. This is the plain sense of the text, as will appear from the words at length: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gather'd of every kind; which when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down and gather'd the good into vessels, but cast the bad away: So shall it be at the end of the world: The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Agreeable to this are the words of St. PAUL, ‡ "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord JESUS shall be reveal'd from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST; who shall be punish'd with *everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*, and from the glory of his power."

In St John, || Christ not only confirms this, but tells us, that the time of this vengeance is nigh at hand, and that none of the wicked shall escape it; "The hour is coming, says he, in which all who are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall

* Chap. xvi. 26.

† 2 Thess. i. from 7, to 9.

‡ Chap. xiii. v. 47. to 50.

|| Chap. v. ver. 28. 29.

"come

"come forth, they who have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they who have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Now, must it not be own'd, that both Good and Bad rise alike to immortality? Or, can it be denied, that *the resurrection of the Good is to eternal life*? This the declaimers against the *eternity* of hell-torments do not pretend to: Why then shall not the resurrection of the bad be to *eternal damnation*? How else is this the last judgment?

But our blessed Saviour, to put this matter past all dispute, has given us, in St. MATTHEW * the very sentences which shall be pronounced on the GOOD and the BAD: "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, *Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*" † Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand; *depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* And these shall go into *everlasting punishment*; but the righteous into *life eternal*. Whence it appears that the *punishments* reserved for the Wicked, will have the very same duration as the Rewards prepared for the Good, which most of our adversaries themselves own to be *Eternal* in the strictest sense of the word.

Farther, ‡ St. JUDE, puts the Reprobate upon the same footing, after the general judgment with the devils: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in *everlasting chains*, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example suffering the vengeance of *eternal fire.*" Now the exclusion of the Devils from the first state must be *Eternal*: Mankind having been created to fill their vacant seats. As therefore, in the day of judgment, those vacant seats will be compleatly fill'd, where shall these fallen angels find room to hope for admittance? And, if the Devils are to suffer eternally, how shall those wretches, who are upon the same footing, escape the like fate? It is for this reason St. Peter || calls them "wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved *for ever.*" And St. Jude; § wandering stars to whom is reserved the "blackness of darkness *for ever.*"

So express are the holy-scriptures, both old and new! Nothing then but wilful obstinacy and infidelity can make those who admit their authority, call the *eternity* of hell-torments in question. I might quote innumerable other texts as plain as these I

* Chap. xxv. ver. 34. † *Ibid.* ver. 41. 42, ‡ Ver. 6. 7. || 2 Chap xi. ver. 17. § Ver. 13.

have alledged: But I think these more than sufficient to prove this doctrine irrefragable. However, I shall add one more from the revelations of St. John, * who after speaking of the temporal judgment of GOD on the *wicked*, adds: "And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone; where the beast and the false prophet are, and *shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*" Where it is very remarkable, that the apostle makes use of the very same emphatic words *for ever and ever*, to express the duration of the Punishments of those unhappy beings, as he afterwards applies to express the duration of the *felicity* prepared for the *blessed*, of whom he says, that they *shall reign for ever and ever*. From all which it is self-evident that as the Resurrection of the Good which our Saviour speaks of in the gospel of this sacred writer above-quoted, is a Resurrection to Life-eternal, so shall the Resurrection of the Wicked be a Resurrection to eternal Damnation.

And however it may seem severe to such as are but little disposed, to avoid the consequence of this sentence, our Saviour fully clears his mercy in the sequel of this chapter: "I can of my own self do nothing, says he: As I hear I judge; and my judgment is just." That is, as GOD, I cannot do any thing unmerciful or unjust. The sentence I pass must be according to what I hear. In rewarding the good "with *eternal life*, my judgment is just and in punishing the *wicked* with *eternal damnation*, my judgment is still just: And to Me belongeth mercy in both; for I render to every man according to his work."

May I not then conclude this part of my discourse with St. Paul, in the iii d. to the Romans: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art who judgest: For wherein thou judgest GOD, thou condemnest thyself. And thinkest thou this, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of GOD? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of GOD leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself, wrath unto the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of GOD, who will render to every man according to his deeds."

Thus far, Christians, I have given you sufficient evidence, I hope, from the Prophets, Apostles, and CHRIST himself, to reconcile the Justice and Mercy of GOD, in inflicting eternal Torments on the Wicked: And thus far I have proved this irrefragable doctrine from the holy scripture: Which I have taken according to the natural unwrested, unforced and obvious meaning of the words; and as they are universally understood by the holy fathers

* Chap. xx. 10.

and divines of the Church in all ages. And that the fathers and divines did understand the eternity of hell torments, in this natural obvious sense of a proper eternity, *a parte post*, or *futurely*; the few passages I shall here give, out of the innumerable many I could give (if the limits of a sermon wou'd permit) will suffice to remove all just occasion of doubt.

"Every-one (says *Origenes* *) who confesses not the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, to be the only true God is estranged from eternal life. For this confession is declared to be life everlasting." Whatever unsafe opinions then, *Origenes* might entertain concerning the *Holy-Ghost*: It is plain he acknowledged a proper eternity of existence in human beings, for the future.

St. *Cyprian* says: † We look upon Paradise as our native country: Already have we there our parents the patriarchs: Why then do we not haste and push-on; that we may enjoy the sight of our country, the embraces of our parents? There an innumerable number of friends are waiting for us: There a large and copious multitude of parents, brethren and children, are wishing for our arrival; already assured of their own immortality, but still solicitous for ours."

"Neither (says he elsewhere †) can he be other than joyful and thankful, who, having once been subject to death and mortality, is become so happy as to have Immortality ensured to him." See the same venerable father *de Laude Martyrii*; if that work be his, as it probably is.

"In eternal life (says St. *Basil* †) there is no more change neither in body nor in soul: No more contradiction of thoughts; no more diversity of sentiments; no more disturbance to interrupt the steadiness of a quiet mind. No: That is the region of the living, who perpetually exist in an uninterrupted equality and likeness to themselves, in a day which has no night, in a life which suffers no sleep, or other image of death, &c."

St. *Ambrose* § argues thus: "If this life is in itself to be fled from, to be quitted, that we may flee from vexation, that we may rest from miseries; how much more is that rest to be coveted, which shall give Perpetuity to the joys which are to succeed our future resurrection?"

"Where is our mighty grievance (says St. *Gregory Nazianzen* **) in being snatch'd from hence, to be placed in a state of true Life? in being deliver'd from the inconstancies, vapourish fickleness, and surfeits of our present situation, to be placed in common with other permanent and unchangeable Beings, like so ma-

* *Epist. ad Rom.* † *Traict de Mortal. Tate* † *Ad Demet.* † *In Psalm xlv.* § *De Resurrext.* ** *Orat.* 19.

"ny exulting luminaries, around the sovereign source of light?"

St. *Cyril* * has these words: "It was meet, not only that the soul should be lifted by the holy spirit to the possession of a blessed life; but even that this our vile Body should be render'd immortal, by the very ministry of it's kindred senses, such as the tasting, touching, and nutrition."

The following reflection is of St. *Peter Chrysologus* † upon these words of St. *Paul*: "Every-one, who striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things: And they indeed, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one." "If then (says the saint) some persons undertake excessive toils for the sake of a perishable diadem; how much more does it not behove us to grudge no labour, who have the promise of a heavenly recompense, with a crown of eternal glory." And a little lower: The blessed martyrs (adds he) not only in the field of battle, conquer'd the enormities of sin, but even gain'd a compleat victory over death itself, and took possession of immortality for their recompense."

Thus far it appears, that these Fathers were unanimously agreed in the belief of a proper eternity of the existence of the blessed. And since our divine Lord puts the just and the unjust, the elect and the reprobate on the same footing, with regard to the duration of their existence: It is plain that these sacred authors, who asserted the eternity of rewards prepared for the former, must also hold the like eternity of punishments prepared for the latter. But to put the matter past the power of equivocation, let us hear the express sentiments of some of them on this very head.

The last mention'd father, then in another sermon † speaking of the rich man in hell, reasons thus: "What a folly was not his to expect (says he) from a father the mercy he had denied to a brother? *Have mercy on me?* What had mercy to do with him, to whom all was turn'd into matter of torment? Or what relief could his petitions obtain from a Father, in whose breast he had his accuser?"

Now tho' this venerable writer, be here speaking literally of the father *Abraham*; it is self-evident, that he speaks allegorically of the divine father. Otherwise his argument would conclude nothing. For inasmuch as all was turn'd into matter of torment for that hapless wretch, by so much would mercy have had a great deal the more room to interfere in his relief; if (as the saint supposes and must suppose) the immutable truth, and infinit justice of God, had not required that matter of torment to be everlasting.

* In *Johan.* liii. c. 39. † *Sermon.* exix.

† *Serm.* cxxiv.

inglv.

ingly irreparable: That same immutable truth and incorruptible justice, persisting forever as an accuser of his unrepenting obstinacy. And that this was the sense in which the holy Father mean'd to express himself, appears from the conclusion he thence draws a little lower: "If then (*continues he*) the "subterraneous prison of hell has an indisputable "existence; if there is a *xavus ardens*, a burning "fire; if there is a hell to torment without end; "alas? Whence this our senseless stupidity? "Where are we? What strange dream is it which "seduces us? What unaccountable self-absence is it "which thus weds us to death? &c."

St. Hierom is very express in this matter. * "The devil (*says he*) and his angels, with all who do "his works and defame their brethren, shall a- "long with him, suffer alike the miserable inheri- "tance of eternal fire. And if any one deny that "the devils are to be confined to eternal flames; "he too shall have his part of God's inheritance "with him, but shall receive that part in the same "fire, where he will one day sadly feel the truth he "now so rashly denies."

But let any man suppose ten thousand hells (*says* "St. John Chrysostom †) he supposes nothing in "comparison with the being excluded from the "glory of heaven, and the hearing Christ say: *I "know you not.*" I presume then that the ten of the hells of your millenarian dreamers, would be (at least) nine times less than nothing, to the idea which this holy father entertain'd of that mansion of horror. For if the damnation of the reprobate, chiefly consists in their being disown'd by Christ; and Christ's eternal truth consists in being eternally consistent in itself; must not they be eternally disown'd by him, who have once deserved to be so, and can never more deserve the opposit, by the irrevocable state of their obstinacy in evil? And if they are eternally disown'd by him; must they not be eternally wretched without him?

For, says St. Augustin: † "In hell the repro- "bate will be tormented with the sting of repen- "tance, but will never be emended by the conver- "sion of their will: They will condemn indeed "their own iniquity; but with such fruitless aver- "sion, as shall not make them enamour'd with the "justice opposit to it; for this they will never "more be able to love or desire." See the same father *Genes. lib. 8.* likewise *Serm. ad Erm.* and in innumerable other places.

"The soul which is once fix'd in that wretched "place (*says the great St. Gregory §*) may well be "said to have lost it's being, without losing it: Be- "ing compel'd to endure for ever a deathless death; "a defection which shall know no desistance; and

* *Epist. 34.* † *Homil. 33 in Matth.* ‡ *De Fide ad*
Pet. § Moral. iv.

"an end without any conclusion: Inasmuch as it's "death becomes immortal; it's defection becomes "indefectible; and it's end extended to an infinit "duration." And elsewhere * the same venerable "accounts for it thus: "The fire of hell being "incorporeal, shall nevertheless corporally tor- "ture the reprobate who are thrown into it: It "is neither kindled by human art, nor nourish'd "with combustible fuel; but once created, is un- "quenchably lasting: for it requires no supplies of "matter, and can receive no addition to the inten- "sity of it's ardour." See the same sacred writer *Moral. viii.* In *illud Matth. viii.* *They shall be cast*
into utter darkness. Likewise *Moral. xv, xxx.* and innumerable other places.

"The fire of Hell (*says St. Isidore †*) shall "blaze clear enough to it's wretched inhabitants, "to augment their misery, by discovering to them "every object which may strike them with hor- "ror, but never so clear as to afford them matter "of joy in any prospect of consolation."

The same also, St. Bernard tells us, in other words ‡, "We have deserved Hell; (*says he*) "where there is no refectio ever to be tasted; "no consolation to be met with; no end to be "come at." And the reason for it he gives us elsewhere. "¶ Therefore is it, *says the Saint,* "that the guilt of the unrelenting sinner, though "but transiently committed, will be eternally pun- "ish'd; because that guilt, though very brief in "his execution of it, is lasting, in the perversity "of his will: Inasmuch, that, was he never to "die, he would never desist from sin: And, there- "fore, does he covet to live forever, only that he "may be capable of sinning-on forever."

The words of Hugo are likewise very strong. § "Hell, *says he,* is an immeasurable lake, an un- "fathomable deep, full of unparallel'd heat, into- "lerable stench, and innumerable pains. There "resides nothing but wretchedness, utter dark- "ness, and no manner of order. There abides e- "ternal horror; there, in a word, there is no good "to be hoped for, and no evil which may not be "expected."

I might have added many other very weighty pas- sages out of the abovemention'd Fathers and Divines, and could still add, out of other sacred, orthodox writers (yet unmention'd) of every century, from that of Christ to the present, an almost innumera- ble number of irrefragable authorities: All as ex- press, and many much more express, than the few I have here produced, in proof of the universal, constant assent of the Church, to the invincible doctrin of the proper eternity of Hell torments. But, these would require a very large volume a-

* *Moral ix.* † *De Summo Bono, l. 1.*
‡ *Serm. iv. Quadrag.* || *Epist. 253.* § *De Anima lib. iv.*
part:

part: And, therefore, I purposely omit them to avoid prolixity. §

For the very same reason I have forbore to transcribe, in their proper places, St. *Justin* Martyr, *Athenagoras*, the Christian philosopher of *Athens*, St. *Theophilus*, archbishop of that *see*, and *Tertullian*, who are all very strenuous in the support of this doctrine: St. *Justin*, *Apolog.* i. p. 41, 45, 46. --- *Apolog.* ii. p. 59, 64, 67, 71, 87. --- *Dialog. cum Tryph.* p. 254, 264. --- *Epist. ad Diognet.* p. 501: --- *Athenagoras, de Resurrect. Mortuor.* p. 54: --- St. *Theophilus, Epist. ad Autolic.* i. p. 78; and *Epist. ad Eundem* ii. p. 110, 112. For all which quotations see the joint edition of the works of these Fathers, printed, in folio, at *Paris*, by C. *Morelle*, anno 1636. --- And *Tertullian, Apologet. adv. Gentes*, p. 48. cap. xiii. and p. 79. cap. xlviii. in *fin.* together with his paraphrast, *Zephyrus*, and his commentator *Pamelius*, to be seen in the folio edition of him, at *Paris*, 1616.

Now, all these authorities can mean nothing, if they do not mean a proper eternity of duration belonging to human beings: Whether those beings be in a state of glory hereafter, or in a state of torment, when they shall have once left the unsettled state of this life for the permanence of another. And, if they do mean thus much; can it be any longer denied, or doubted, that, according to the sacred Scriptures, and the sense in which the Fathers understood them, the torments of unrepenting sinners in a future state must be *eternal*, properly *eternal*?

But, what can Scripture avail towards convincing men, who are, perhaps, ready to give-up the very Scriptures, and Christ himself, rather than think of the eternity of those torments, which they are but too conscious of having deserved, and are not sufficiently resolved to avoid, by repentance or amendment of a life which, at present, suits the corruption of their hearts. Still, for the sake of truth, let us proceed to shew,

II. The conformity of this doctrine with right reason, from the nature of the *infinite* offender, and of the *finite* offender.

The soul of man, in this mortal state, is so miserably immersed in matter, flesh, and body, that it is almost incapable of conceiving any thought but what is, in some measure, more or less carnal, and partaking of matter. Hence it is, with the utmost difficulty, that the mind soars to any ideas ever so little abstracted from matter, or from what is ana-

§ A prolixity unpardonable in a work, which still bears the title of a Sermon; and which therefore, was preached, and, at it's first appearance, printed without any other quotations than those taken from Holy Writ.

lagous to, and bears a proportion with, matter and flesh. Nevertheless, we can never be able to form any notions worthy the Divine Being, without abstracting and purifying them from all matter, and from all comparison with what is created. To our weakness, in this particular, may be attributed all the gross and mistaken ideas we form of God and his divine attributes. And this is the rock on which have splitten, those grossly mistaken men, who, to prove God *merciful*, in the sense in which they would have him so, attempt nothing less than to make him *unjust*. Unable to soar to the comprehension of what *he is*, they would fain lower him to what *they are*. Men are sometimes just, but then their justice is rigour, severity, and tainted with cruelty; they are at other times merciful too, but then, their mercy is fellow-feeling, softness, and conscious weakness. The one flows from a mixture of fear and self-preservation; the other, from a mixture of fear, and of love of ease: They do justice not to be oppress'd by the injustice they fear; and, they shew mercy, through fear of incurring the misery they see before them, and are conscious of being liable to, from the uneasiness they feel at the sight of it. In short, their justice is the strut of fancied strength, and their mercy the abortion of real weakness. They are never merciful and just together: For, (as their justice and mercy flow from different principles) when they are merciful, it is by relaxing from the strictness of justice; and when they are strictly just, it is by stifling the yearnings of mercy. 'Tis by this rule the declaimers against the *eternal punishments* of the wicked, pretend to measure the justice and mercy of God. They have no other ideas of either, than the unworthy ones they form from a vile comparison of them with their own. For want of giving themselves the trouble to soar above their corrupt imaginations, they have no other epithets to give the Divine justice than *severe*, *revengeful*, *dire*, *cruel*, &c. and no other terms to express his mercy by, than *pity* and *compassion*: As if God could not be just without being cruel, or taking a pleasure in punishing us; and could not be merciful without compassionating or feeling, and sharing with us in our miseries. What an unworthy idea for creatures to entertain of a Creator!

No, God is just, and he is merciful; but he is neither cruel nor compassionate, in the real meaning of these words: He neither is capable of enjoying any cruel pleasure in seeing his creatures miserable, nor of feeling the miseries they endure. His anger consists not, like ours, in any disorderly tumult within him; his wrath is only such an essential aversion from evil, as requires the removal of the evil from his presence: And his mercy is no satisfaction of the sufferings he relieves, but an absolute communication

communication of his goodness in the relief. In a word, he is not just through the fear of injustice, or merciful through any yieldingness of his nature to sympathised misery: But, he is both just and merciful, because it is consistent with the immutable truth of his divine nature to be so.

Hence appears the essential difference between the justice and mercy of creatures, and the justice and mercy of God. Created justice and mercy proceed from different causes, have different objects, and pursue different ends; and, therefore, may exist separate: But the justice and mercy of God issue from the same immutable truth, have immutable truth for their end, and immutable truth for their object, as well in the felicity bestow'd on the good, as in the misery inflicted on the wicked; and, therefore, God cannot be just without being merciful, and cannot be merciful without being just. It is immutably true, true, that the good, in virtue of God's merciful promise, deserve the glory they are crown'd with; then it is immutable truth in God that makes him merciful and just in bestowing that glory. So it is unalterably true, that the wicked claim and merit the punishments which God inflicts on them, inasmuch as they refuse those mercifully promised rewards, and chuse the punishments which he mercifully threaten'd them with, to deter them from wickedness; therefore, God's unalterable truth, makes him just and merciful in giving them the punishments they have chosen. Now, it is inconsistent with this immutable truth, that God should ever be good, or *just and merciful*, only by halves, and not render, to every-one, to the full extent of his desert; therefore, it is immutably true, that God must inflict *eternal* punishments on the reprobate, because their wickedness deserves that the punishment they have chosen, preferably to the rewards they might have chosen, should be *eternal*.

Every offence is measured by the malice of the offender, and the greatness of the person offended. An insult done to an equal is a crime, but becomes an outrage when done to a master, adds rebellion in a child to his parent, and is high treason from a subject to his sovereign. It must, therefore, be infinite when offer'd to an infinite being. However, for this to be true, there must be malice in the person from whom the insult comes; and, to have malice he must be in possession of reason and free-will in an actual power of choice. Wherefore, a child and a changling, are incapable of having malice in the true sense of the word; because, though they have a will, they have not reason to direct it. In like manner, a man, who is perfectly *compos*, is incapable of malice in an act he is irresistibly forced to; and, therefore, should a man, in his senses, falling from the top of a house kill his father, or his so-

vereign, he is not guilty of parricide, or regicide, because not in possession of choice. But, a man perfectly possess of sense and liberty, cannot commit an offence without guilt; because the possession he is in of his reason and free-will, proves his assent to the evil, and, therefore, argues a malice in him proportion'd to the nature of the offence. As, therefore, the wicked must be supposed to be intelligent free agents, otherwise, they could not be wicked, they must be guilty of an infinite malice in the crimes they commit against God.

Nor will it avail to extenuate their malice, to say, that God is impassable by nature, and, therefore, incapable of receiving any real injury from the crimes of the wicked. It is true, that God cannot be destroy'd: But, are any attempts, to destroy him, less criminal for that? God is so essentially truth and goodness, that, were he not immutable, falsity and wickedness would destroy him? That, therefore, he is not destroy'd, there are no thanks due to the false and the wicked, but to his own divine immutability. Should a man throw a stone at a glass, and the glass not break; would any thanks be due to the flinger? He did his utmost: The stone by its nature was sufficiently opposed to the glass to shatter it: And, that it did not, is not owing to the man who throw'd it, but to the resistibility of the glass. So if I may be allow'd to compare little things with great; the prophane with the sacred; and the finite with the infinite; that God cannot suffer any real injury in his own divine person, all the thanks and glory is due to the immutability of his nature; but the malice of the man, who attempts to injure or insult him, is still the same: And nothing can extenuate the infinite malice of it. For tho' a man, as a finite limited being is incapable of producing any physical effect infinite in itself; yet all his actions, consider'd as moral, are specified by the object they terminate in: And therefore every offence against God which destroys his grace, may and must assume an infinite guilt; because it is an insult to an Infinite being.

Now, as it appears, that God is essentially just, he must essentially require an infinite satisfaction, for an infinite offence done to him. And, this infinite satisfaction can be given him no other way, than by the offender himself, or, by the infinite merits of the mediation of Christ. Once, therefore, the wicked refuse that mediation, by dying in their sin, they have no means of making that infinite satisfaction; but by an infinite punishment suffer'd, in their own persons. And, as the finiteness of their own nature renders them incapable of suffering a punishment, infinite in the bulk, that punishment must be infinite in point of duration, and consequently *eternal*.

Again, those very punishments they suffer are something created, and, therefore, cannot be infinite in any other sense, than the infinity of their duration.

Thus then, it appears, upon the whole, that if we consider the nature of the *infinite offender*, and of the *infinite satisfaction* due to the *former* from the *latter*, the torments of the wicked must be *eternal*.

To reconcile this *infinite justice*, in God, with the *infinity* of his *mercy*, it will suffice to reflect, that the *infinite mercy* of God, places before the wicked *eternal* happiness, or misery; gives them power, means and aid, to chuse the *former*; and often, even after their chusing the *latter*, offers them the mediation of his holy son, for a satisfaction of the infinite offence they commit in chusing the *latter*: And is slow in anger, to give them the sufficient time (and more than sufficient) to accept that mediation. If then, they reject all this, and prefer an infinity of torments to an *eternal* felicity, and their own future miserable satisfaction, for their crimes, to the saving, present satisfaction of Christ; is it not mercy as well as justice in God, to reward them with their own option? What greater mercy can a merciful judge shew, than to give a criminal the choice of his own sentence? God, therefore, is infinitely merciful at the same time as he is inflexibly just, in rewarding the wicked, with those infinite punishments, which they inflexibly chuse, earn, and prefer to infinite felicity. To this, if we add the enhancement of felicity, which the good receive, from the comparison of their *eternal* happiness, with the *eternal* misery of these wretches, we must be lost to all grace and shame, if we do not glorify God, and acknowledge him to be equally as merciful, as he is just, in inflicting *eternal* torments on the wicked: Convinced, with the royal psalmist, that "unto thee, O Lord, "belongeth mercy: For thou renderest to every "man according to his work.

But some men are not to be convinced. Their wishes, or their fears, stand them in the stead of conviction: Every fallacy of their weak understanding, is, with them, a demonstration and the texts of scripture, they least comprehend, are the most irrefragable authorities they have to build upon. However, that they may have no room to plead ignorance as an excuse for their obstinacy; let us examine:

III. The most important objections which can be offer'd against this fundamental point of faith; and conclude the whole with some moral reflections.

"Let us represent God to ourselves, antecedent "to the creation, designing to form intelligent

"beings. What could we presume, concerning "the state of such beings, to be produced, and to "issue from the all-powerful hands of a creator, "perfectly happy in himself, but that they, like "wife, should be made as happy, as their finite "capacities would admit them to be? For what "other end could a self-sufficing independant being, "incapable of receiving any addition to his own "felicity, have, in forming creatures to his own "likeness, than that of making them as happy as "they could be?" Thus set out our modern sticklers against the *eternity* of hell-torments; and, thus will I fairly start with them, to examine what can be infer'd from this supposition?

"Why truly, say they, there is no place for "any thing but benevolence and happiness. The "pure and perfect God, cannot possibly do any "thing but what is so."

True: And what then? Is not justice and punishment, when due, equally good with benevolence and happiness, where merited? The pure and perfect God, then, is equally good in punishing with justice, as in rewarding with mercy.

To return then to the creation. --- If we suppose, as indeed we ought, that God from all *eternity* decree'd the creation of intelligent beings, to enjoy *eternal* happiness, in as ample a manner as their nature would admit of; we must suppose that he decree'd them to be perfectly free: *First*, because nothing can be perfectly happy without perfect liberty; and, *secondly*, because, without perfect liberty, they could not have purchased that *eternal* happiness, nor possess it in their own right: --- A condition, without which, their happiness would have been but half-happiness, since no felicity we hold, as a mere unmerited gift, is equal to that which we possess, in some measure, in our own right. In consequence then of God's designing his intelligent creatures, to be as happy as they could be, it was necessary he should decree them to be created, in such a state as might enable them to possess their happiness in their own right, by purchasing it. Now, mankind being but creatures, at the best, and of finite capacities, could not possibly be in a state of purchasing infinite felicity, in the most perfect manner, but, by God's laying them under restrictions, and promising them that felicity, as a reward, for complying with these restrictions. And, if the promise of rewarding their compliance with infinite felicity could be any inducement to them to obey him; the threat of punishing their disobedience, with infinite misery, must add a farther inducement to their compliance. This necessarily implies, that men must be created free-agents, and absolutely able, and provided with means, to obey, or disobey, the commands God lay'd upon them. For whatever is not perfectly free

free and able to act, or not act, cannot merit reward, or punishment, for obeying, or disobeying. To prove then, that the decree of *eternal* punishments is no ways derogatory from, but, on the contrary, an ineffable effect of God's infinit goodness, it will be sufficient to reflect, that God created man to be eternally happy in his own right, and to avoid *eternal* misery, if he so pleases; and created him in a state, and with means suited to that purpose.

"But, why did not God create man incapable of disobeying him, and consequently deserving *eternal* punishment? Would not that have been more consistent with infinit bounty and benevolence?"

I answer, no; for the reason above assign'd. Man could not be compleatly happy, without being so in some measure, by his own right, in virtue of God's promise: He could not merit happiness, in virtue of that promise, in so compleat a manner as he now can, without a free-will to obey, or disobey, God's commands; and therefore it was more consistent with God's infinit goodness and benevolence to create him free to good and evil. For tho' the liberty, essential to absolute merit, be merely that of *acting* or *not acting*, and not that of *doing good* or *evil*; yet the consideration of liberty to do *good*, or *evil*, must greatly enhance the merit of such mere men as, being free to both, reject the latter, and make choice of the former, in obedience to the grace given by God to direct them in their choice, notwithstanding which, Christ most perfectly merited, in the strictest sense; tho' he could not sin. For in the instant of his incarnation, he was establish'd in sanctity by that divine *Hypostasis* under which both his natures subsisted. And as his divine nature, thus divinely subsisted, was *eternally* and *naturally* entitled to that immense self-happiness which, from all *eternity*, it enjoys; so his human nature, from the instant of his incarnation, in virtue of that *hypostatic union*, became *eminently* entitled to to possess in the most perfect manner possible, by possessing, in it's own right, the fulness of bliss, it now enjoys, to all *eternity*. And therefore a liberty to evil was so far from being requisit in Christ to merit; that it could not even have enhanced his merit, or, in the least, added to the *eminent* right he had to glory. Nay, such a liberty was incompatible with his nature, consider'd in it's *hypostatic* circumstance. For thus consider'd, his will and the divine will were in an unalterable conformity; and therefore tho' Christ had the liberty of *not acting*, if he had so pleased, what he positively did act; yet if he had chosen *not to act*, his *not acting* would have been equally from a principle of goodness, because it would have proceeded from the conformity of his human

will to that of his divinity. But, with regard to mere man, the case is quite different. There is not that intimate conformity between his and God's will: And tho', consider'd abstractedly, he might absolutely merit without a liberty of *contrariety*, as the divines call it, *that is*, without being free to good or evil; (the liberty of *contradiction*, that is, the liberty to *act* or *not act*, being alone essential to merit in itself) nevertheless, if we consider man under the present dispensation, and subject to the positive law of God; it was absolutely necessary for him, in order to merit that he should have a liberty of *contrariety*, or a liberty to *good* or *evil*. Not because this condition is essential to *liberty in itself*, but because a creature, subject to God's positive law, when bid to *act*, could not abstain from acting, without disobeying the command of God, and consequently doing *evil*; and therefore could not be free to *act*, or *not act*, without a concomitant liberty to *obey*, or *disobey* that is, without being free at the same time to *good* or *evil*.

Neither does this liberty imply any essential weakness and frailty in which men were created. No: God created them strong and upright: Placed *eternal life* and *eternal death* before them: And, that they might enjoy the former in their own right by virtue of his promise; he enter'd into a gracious covenant with them; gave them a free-will to fulfill or break their part of the covenant; and, to attract them to the choice of the former, he gave them a sufficient portion of grace to determin their free-will. It was then the perfection of infinit mercy in God; when he decree'd the creation of a free-agent; to decree, from the same *eternal* period, a sufficient portion of grace and means to guide him to an advantageous choice of the ample happiness he was design'd for; and, as a double inducement to him to make use of that grace and those means, to decree an *eternity* of bliss to the proper application of them, and an *eternity* of torments to the abuse of them. And if mankind, in defiance of that mercy, will neither be enticed to *eternal* happiness by *eternal* promises, nor deterr'd from *eternal* misery by *eternal* threats; must God therefore be deem'd less *merciful* for being *just*? Or must he derogate from *eternal* truth and justice, to favour criminals, who have voluntarily renounced all mercy forever, by voluntarily persisting in offences which *eternal* truth has stamp'd with *eternal* reprobation?

Yes, truly; if we believe the declaimers against God's *eternal* justice. "For, *say they*, the *eternity* of hell-torments destroys itself by it's own strength; gives the lye to the voice of universal nature, of conscience, and even of common-sense: All which unanimously conspire to bear

"witness to the infinit goodness of God." But this is engaging with a phantom. Where is the wretch who denies the infinit goodness of God? Or how does that infinit goodness contradict the Eternity of hell-torments? "Why truly, say they, boundless benignity, as that of God is; can never cease to do good to every creature, as far as this is capable of receiving it." Very good! Who denies all this? But must the sweet effects of his goodness, therefore extend to those wretches who are incapable of receiving it? Has it not already been clearly proved, that the *inflexibly wicked* have voluntarily put themselves out of the reach of mercy, by preferring the *eternal* threats of eternal misery, to the repeated opportunities and offers of infinit happiness? And must the infinit justice of God, which requires an *eternal* satisfaction for an infinit offence, never take place; but always submit to the infinit malice of an offender, who dares his justice, and contemns his mercy? shocking illusion!

"But how then (*add they*) can the divine goodness be vindicated, in many instances, which are of a nature undeniably evil, and which we, to our own sad misfortune, feel, particularly his suffering men to fall into that direful condition, into which they precipitated looh after the creation?"

This our adversaries themselves answer, by refunding all in the unsearchable goodness of God. And this matter, they allow, may be placed in a light, where it will be easy to see, that *Adam*, freely deviating from the felicity he was placed in, could not but fall into evil; and that, having done so, it was but right, man's condition should have a tincture of the choice he had made. So that what we call justice, and they call severity, is but the natural effect of the bad disposition man has more or less freely contracted.

Now this issue, *say they*, could not be prevented; without inverting the order of things; *that is*, (*as they certainly must mean*) man's free-will, Whereas such an inversion could not but have been inconsistent with the divine goodness, and might possibly have been a greater disadvantage to mankind; than any thing they have now to complain of.

Our adversaries will, by no means, have it consistent with the divine goodness, to invert the order of things, as far as it may relate to man's free-will, because they are parties concern'd in it themselves, and are sensible what a miserable state they must be in, was that order inverted, and man divested of liberty to good and evil. But, because they are loth to submit to the ill consequences of their abusing,

and misapplying that free-will; they would fain have God give-up the infinit satisfaction due to him for infinit offences, however inconsistent it be for His divine goodness, to invert the order of his justice and truth. Such are the gross inconsistencies attending on error and ignorance!

However, to remove this absurdity out of sight, they think it sufficient to say, that "What the divine goodness never fails in, is the setting all engines to work, for repairing the damage man has done himself."

This is strictly true; and so true, that he spared not his only-begotten son, but sacrificed him to the same ineffable purpose. Yet, as this was done without inverting the order of things, and consequently without the least infringement upon man's free-will; Man is still left at liberty to make use of, or to reject, those means of reparation, as he pleases: And, in consequence of that liberty, he may either merit, by grace, the good effects of that reparation; or must incur the *eternal* punishments due to his obstinacy, in resisting the engines which God set to work for that reparation: And it is inconsistent with the order of God's goodness and justice, not to reward or punish him accordingly, for the one or the other.

But according to these false reasoners, *the reparation* which the divine goodness does, and must set all engines to work for, is *nothing less than a general restoration of all mankind*. So that, according to them, man must be absolutely free to serve or slight his maker; and the Almighty Maker, in virtue of his promise, must be (as he is *eternal* truth) under an absolute obligation of rewarding the good with *eternal* rewards for his service, and tho' he is infinit truth) must be absolutely bound to make it up with the *wicked*, by a *general restoration*; notwithstanding their having wilfully and obstinately offended him, in spite of his threatening them with *eternal* torments. Is there any consistency in this? Is there either religion, equity, or even common-sense in it? Is not this pulling God from his throne, to raise man, wretched man, to a more absolute state of freedom, than his Maker? Man must be infinitely rewarded for finite useless services: God must not be infinitely satisfied for infinit insults? Oh, how true is it, that *the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel*!

Yet the sticklers against divine justice, are not contented with stopping here: *One abyss calls on another*; and they have no other refuge from the former absurdity, than by running into a worse. They pretend to vindicate this self-contradicting doctrine, by recurring to the purpose of the Creator, to render all men happy. "This intention of the Almighty, *say they*, it is certain, must some time take place:

“ place: And since it obviously does not in this life; it evidently follows, that it’s accomplishment is reserved for that to come.”

I might answer this objection, with observing, that the wicked are generally happy in this life: *They have already their reward*, as our Saviour says: * And as their wickedness intitles them to no farther reward; they have no room to expect any happiness in the next life. But let us see to what length they carry their absurdity.

“ Truly, *they say*, man being miserable from his very birth, and even in the womb of his mother; goodness, or indeed justice, requires that the happiness he was made to enjoy, should infallibly be sometime his portion. Nay, we may even presume, that boundless goodness will make their transient state of evil, an enhancement of their final good: So that, by the experience of pain, they will be susceptible of more exquisite pleasure than they could have been without tasting of it.” Such are the preposterous lengths to which error leads a man, who is weak enough to be hood-wink’d by it! If this were the case; who would not chuse to be wicked? For, does not this system place the *wicked* upon a much better footing than the most faithful of God’s servants? the wicked are to engross all the pleasure and prosperity in this life, as it is undeniable matter of fact, that they generally do; they may rebel against the laws of God, and their reward is to be certain *transient* torments, which shall enhance their *eternal* felicity: While, on the contrary, the good are to suffer all manner of ills in this life, and when they have faithfully obey’d the will of God, they are to be punish’d with a degree of happiness, inferior to that of the wicked, for want of it’s being enhanced by the like torments, to those which the wicked transiently suffer’d. I call the transient torments of the wicked, a reward: For, in such case, they would be so, inasmuch as they would be the means of enhancement of eternal felicity; as the felicity of the good could not but be a *punishment*, when compared to the greater felicity they had unjustly lost. I say unjustly; for sure the eternal felicity of the good ought rather to receive an enhancement, than that of the wicked. Hence, I hope, it appears sufficiently, what a motley attribute our adversaries, endeavour to make the divine goodness, by excluding from it the essential considerations of his justice and truth. How absurd then must this notion of God’s goodness appear, and how opposit to that of *David*, when he cry’d out: “ Unto thee, O lord, belongeth mercy; for thou render’st to every man according to his works.”

But, to answer this objection more directly, let us recall their own principles. “ The purpose of

a. St. Mat. vi.

“ the Creator, to render all men happy, *could not tend to invert the order of things:*” That being, according to their own system, *inconsistent with divine goodness*. As therefore this purpose of God no ways infringes upon man’s Free-will; man could not be made happy, without being willing to be so. God’s purpose therefore of making all men happy by their free-will, leaves them perfectly free to be happy if they will; but cannot force them to be so, without inverting the order of things. And therefore God’s purpose of making free-agents happy, is no ways frustrated by some free-agents never being happy; Because it was equally his purpose, that they should be free to be happy, or miserable, as they pleased. So that his intention always takes place in this world, as well as in the next. Inasmuch as he intended, that if they persevered in willing to be happy, they should be so eternally; and if they inflexibly will’d to be miserable, they should eternally be so.

But to extricate themselves from this invincible chain of truths, they ask: “ Would it not be worthier of immense goodness, to exempt man from all manner of punishment after this life; since he was form’d for bliss?”

Here they attempt to answer themselves: “ All the perplexity of this argument, *say they*, arises from the narrowness of our own understandings; it amounts to this: Why did God make man a free-agent? For a confined liberty, is no liberty.”

And may not this answer be retorted on themselves? Would it not be worthier of immense goodness, not to suffer man to be eternally miserable, who was form’d for eternal bliss? No, it would not. Why did God make man a free-agent, but that he might be completely happy to all Eternity, by meriting so to be? And to do this must he not be free to do works worthy eternal life? But how could he be free to do the good commanded, without being free to deviate from it, and so do evil? For a confined liberty, is no liberty. And is not the consequence plain, that, if man, making use of his free-will, to obey the will of God, merits, in virtue of this divine promise, eternal felicity; he should, in like manner, deserve eternal misery in virtue of this divine threat, when he wilfully persists in disobeying him?

But the sticklers against the Eternity of hell torments, think to elude the strength of these truths, by quibbling about the terms, those threats are express’d in. “ The terms *never, ever, everlasting, eternal*, *say they*, are plainly equivocal, of various significations, and frequently denote no more than a very long or indeterminate duration.” This is very true: But what then?

“ Why there is no necessity therefore, *say these* “ wise

"wise reasoners, from their genuin import, to take them in a rigid and unlimited acceptation in those places where they are made use of, to figure out the punishments of the wicked."

Let us then see what appearance of reason there is for so voluntary and bold an assertion.

In the first place then, I answer, that the doctrine of the eternity of hell-torments, is not merely built upon these and the like terms in holy-writ, but on the necessary connection of justice and truth, with mercy in God; on the infinity of his nature, of man's malice, of the satisfaction due to the former from the latter; and on the insufficiency of man to pay that infinit satisfaction by any other means after death, than by the infinit duration of that satisfaction: All which demonstrably prove the necessity of hell-torments being *eternal*. Wherefore, whether those terms be equivocal or univocal: Whether they had been in holy writ or not; it would still be unalterably true, that the infinit malice of the wicked against an infinit being, must be atoned for by a satisfaction infinit in point of duration, when the finite nature of the offender would not admit of a satisfaction infinit in the bulk, which is the case of the wicked after death.

In the next place, tho', where the sacred scripture speaks of things in their nature temporal, and of transactions of this life, the terms *never, ever, everlasting, eternal, and the like*, are, and must be taken in a less rigorous sense, than the natural import of them implies, and can mean no more than a *very long, or indeterminate duration*; because *eternity* cannot be brought within the compass of time: Yet, with regard to the future punishments of the wicked, they can be taken in no other than the rigorous and natural sense of them. For this reason, the chief torments of the wicked will not begin to the end of the world; when their bodies and souls shall be united, to partake the reward they jointly contributed to deserve. *In the end of the world*, says Christ, * *The angels shall sever the wicked from among the just*. In the day of judgment, the last day, when time shall be no more, Christ tells us, † that he will say to the wicked: *Go ye cursed, into everlasting fire*. What other sense then can *everlasting* be here taken in, than the rigorous and natural one. Can *everlasting* mean no more than a very long and indeterminate duration, when spoken at a period, when time is at an end, and on the point of being absorb'd in eternity, *in the twinkling of an eye*?

Besides — is not this confessedly the *last* judgment? How then can the *everlasting* torments, the criminals are condemn'd to, be revoked by any judgment posterior to it? Can the *last* sentence suffer an appeal? If so; it is the *last*, and not the *last*:

* *Matt. xiii.* † *Matt. xviii.*

An absurdity too great to need any confutation. The hapless wretches are entering upon the verge of *eternity*, loaded with their sentence of *everlasting* misery; and time, in the instant of it's destruction: What other duration then have they to expect their miseries to be measured by, than that of *eternity*? Whither can they appeal from the *last* sentence, to be past upon them? Or, how can their *everlasting* misery be revoked, without a fresh sentence, which, after the *last*, there is no room for?

Again, St. John, * tells us, that the devil, the beast, and the false prophet, shall be tormented in the lake of fire and brimstone *for ever and ever*. And the very same expression he makes use of in the last chapter, to express the duration of the felicity of the good: They shall reign *for ever and ever*. St. John makes no difference between the duration of the Felicity of the good, and the misery of the wicked. The expressions are equally strong, nay, the very same; and can be wrested to no other than the rigorous and natural sense of them. From all which it evidently appears, that the *abovemention'd* terms must be taken in their rigid and unlimited acceptation in those places, where they are made use of, to figure out the future punishments of the wicked.†

Still do these enemies to divine justice and truth (unwilling barefacedly to deny the invincible evidence of sacred scripture) attempt to wrest God's word to their own purpose, and pretend to produce many texts, capable of destroying the genuin sense of those we have alledged.

"First, our Saviour Christ is said, in the Acts of the apostles † to come to restore all things. Then, say they, a general restoration of all, both good and wicked, must and will be brought about."

This I have already answer'd, in what I have said to the allegation of God's creating all to be happy. For tho' Christ came to restore all; let it still be remember'd, that he came not to invert the order of things, nor consequently, to destroy man's free-will: And therefore, tho' his general design and end was the restoration of All; yet it was to be a restoration of free-agents, and in course must include a liberty in those free-agents, to benefit by this restoration or not. And thus his intention is no ways frustrated by such as reject his restoration.

"But St. Paul expressly says: § As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Therefore, say our adversaries, as it is past all dispute, that in Adam all die; it is no less certain, that in Christ all shall be made alive."

But is it not plain, from the very words them-

* *Revel. xx.*

† See the preface, p. xii. for a farther answer to this objection. ‡ Chap. iii. v. 21. § 1 Cor. xv. v. 22.

selves,

selves, that the apostle here compares not only the means, but the manner of using them? How did *all* die in *Adam*, but by the abuse of free-will? And can *all* be made alive in Christ, in any other manner than by a right use of that free-will? The words of *St. Paul* then, import no more than, that, as *all*, by free-will, died in *Adam*, their wills being eminently contain'd in his; so, even so (says the apostle) *that is*, in the same manner, shall *all* be made alive in Christ by their free-will. But dare our adversaries advance, that Christ came to force men to life against their will? Or dare they say, that it is consistent with his infinit justice and truth, or consequently, with his mercy, to redeem to life, such as inflexibly persist in rejecting his redemption and mediation?

"But (say our adversaries) the words of the apostle * are a strong confirmation of this (pretend-
"ed) restoration: *the last enemy that shall be de-*
"stroy'd is death. Is the separation of the soul
"from the body the death here design'd? No
"(say they) for after the coming of Christ, there
"shall be no more room for that."

A pretty reason to be assign'd by men in their senses! Because, after Christ's coming, which is the end of time, there shall be no more room for the separation of the soul from the body; therefore that separation cannot be the last enemy destroy'd!

To give a stronger instance of their wisdom, or rather weakness, these sticklers for a general restoration, alledge a farther proof of the death here mention'd not being temporal: "Which is (say
"they) that the inspired writer ranks it among the
"enemies of God: Whereas temporal death is
"really his servant."

But let me ask these sophisters: Whether the death of the Son of God, could be call'd a friendship done him? And is not the separation of soul and body still an enemy to God, while it debars his beloved elect of the full enjoyment of the bliss they are destin'd to? True indeed it is, that death is his servant, employ'd in executing his orders: So is the devil. But is either less opposit to the final end of his goodness? What egregious trifling then are our adversaries compell'd to have recourse to!

The 54th verse is a plain confutation of their mis-construction of this text: Where the apostle expressly says: *When this mortal shall have put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written: Death shall be swallowed up in victory.* Here the apostle in plain terms tells us that, when immortality shall render the soul and body inseparable; then death, *that is*, that separation of soul and body shall cease. Yet these confident triflers are not ashamed to quote this very verse, to prove that *St. Paul* does not mean by death the separation

of soul and body. Was a child to reason in this manner, our adversaries themselves would think a rod more proper, than arguments to confute him.

Nevertheless they lay great stress on the exclamation of *St. Paul*: Oh death! Where is thy sting! Oh! grave! where is thy victory? "If death
"and the grave, (say they) have no other sting
"than sin, and this sting must be destroy'd; does
"it not thence follow, that hell, which depends
"altogether upon it, must be destroy'd also?" Who told our adversaries that sin will be destroy'd
"---- Not the apostle. He only asks a question, which he himself has solved. Sin is pass'd into immortal subjects; who before were mortal, but now are immortalized, and their sin with them. Death consequently has lost it's sting in immortality, and therefore must cease. But does it therefore follow that sin must also? No, on the contrary: Sin is the perpetual worm of the wicked, which shall never die in their inflexible hearts: But when it is separated by a state of immortality from natural death; that death itself must die, and have no more dominion over them. Well then might the apostle cry out: *Oh death! where is thy sting?*

Thus far I have answer'd these mistaken advocates for unjust mercy, according to their own sense of the apostle's words. But if they will allow us the liberty of understanding death, in a something more than literal sense, as it is a separation of the man from God, the fountain of all life, and not a meer separation of soul and body; it must be own'd, that the unhappy objects of divine wrath are eternally subject to a second more (oh infinitely more!) dreadful death, the sting of which they must and will perpetually feel. However, as this does not seem to be the apostle's meaning in the passage in question, where he is manifestly talking of temporal death, the only death which could lose it's sting, and which he tells us receiv'd its sting, *that is*, all it's power, from sin; it is plain, that the apostle's sense must be that in which the soundest part of divines and interpreters have understood him; and that he is speaking with reference to those thrice happy saints, who triumph over death by a glorious resurrection to immortal felicity. Neither can *St. Paul's* words be naturally applied to any other sense, as appears from what immediately precedes: *Death is swallow'd up in victory*: Which is strictly true in those blessed souls; since in them death absolutely loses it's sting, *that is*, all the power it received from sin; *that is*, in a word, the power of separating their bodies and souls, and keeping them from their ultimate perfect union in God. But what does all this infer against the Eternity of Hell-torments?

Yet *St. Paul* is farther quoted in the first to the *Colossians*, * "Where he declares the good pleasure

* 1. Cor. ver. 26.

* Ibid. ver. 20.

"sure of GOD, *say they*, in sending his son into the world to be, *that by him he might reconcile all things to himself?*"

But was this to be done by inverting the order of things, or by any infringement on man's free-will? No.... This our adversaries own to be inconsistent with divine goodness: And therefore I shall content myself with the answer I have already given to the like kind of argument.

"But the same apostle, in the same chapter, calls Christ, 'the first-born of every creature, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.'"

Very true; And is he not? No one denies him to have the same sovereign pre-eminence over the powers of hell, as over the good, and the powers of heaven. What then? Must the wicked therefore be restored, whether they will or not?

"Yes, say our trifiers: Because in the xvth. Verse it is said, that all things that were made by him, were also created for him."

This is undoubted truth, but no ways concludes for our adversaries; unless they can prove that Christ is not glorified in his justice to the wicked, as well as in his bounty to the good, which they will find a difficult task to engage in. Christ, as I have already said, created all for his glory: And, whether, by their free choice, they become eternally happy, or eternally wretched; as he provided all with means to enjoy felicity, he is equally to be glorified: Inasmuch as unto him "belongeth mercy; for he renders to every man according to his work."

It is again urged: "Christ is the first fruits of the creation: Now if the first fruits be holy; the lump also is holy: And if the root be holy; so are the branches."*

I heartily wish these fond quoters of St. Paul would be fair in their quotations. If they were; they would quote the whole sense of him, and not stifle what destroys the tenet they mean to support. St. Paul here talks of the bulk and branches, while they continue in the same perfection with the first fruits. But then he expressly tells us, that some branches are cut-off. "Well, *says the apostle*, because of unbelief they were broken-off: But thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: For if GOD spared not the natural branches; take heed, lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of GOD: On them which fell, severity; but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness." What is there in all this text, to favour a general restoration of the wicked? St. Paul tells us that Christ, the first fruit, is holy, and the bulk and branches are the same, while they are like

* Rom. xi.

him. But then he tells us that there are many branches, which, for want of that likeness, are cut off: He tells us (*Gentiles*) that we are ingrafted in their place; and while we persist in a likeness to him, we shall partake of his holiness: But bids us beware not to imitate those perverse natural branches, the *Jews*, who were cut-off thro' unbelief. For that GOD is good, but then he is just too: And that to them, who use their free-will to fall, he deals severity; as he does goodness to them, who are free to persevere. Indeed, he afterwards tells us, that the *Jews*, if they abide not in their unbelief, shall be grafted-in again: But they are left to their free-will to be ingrafted, or not; and if they reject it, must they not be cut-off for-ever?

"No, say our adversaries, *Christ ask'd all the ends of the earth for his inheritance; * and why, but to reconcile them to GOD?*"

But let me ask them in turn: Did Christ ask to reconcile free-agents with prejudice to their freedom? "No (*they must answer me*): This is inconsistent with divine goodness." Then they are already answer'd. For if free-agents, whom he pray'd and strove to reconcile, inflexibly withstand his reconciling meditation; can he, in justice, or mercy, force them to reconciliation? such weak refuges are our adversaries reduced to!

Yet these disfigurers of GOD's justice, truth, and mercy think they have another strong hold to retire to, in the 5th to the ROMANS: "Where (*say they*) the words of the apostle are very clear: As, by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one man, many were made righteous. The word 'many, in this place (*continue they*) undoubtedly comprehends all mankind. All were made sinners by Adam: Therefore all ought to be made righteous by Jesus Christ."

To this I answer, *first*, that it is false that all were made sinners by Adam, for Christ himself was not: *Secondly*, all are not to be made righteous in a different manner than they were made sinners. Wherefore, as they were not made sinners with prejudice to their free-will; they are not to be made righteous unless they please: And, consequently, as it is too sadly true, that many have not made use of their free-will to be made righteous by him; it is sadly as true, that many will not be made righteous by his obedience. Many then cannot stand here for all mankind. And tho' all do not become righteous; Christ's good intention is not thereby frustrated: As he intended not to invert the order of things, or force the free-agency of man. Nor will it be to their purpose to urge what the apostle adds in the same chapter, that *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

* Psalm ii.

For by this he meant no more than to display the riches and strength of God's grace, in opposition to the poverty and weakness of man's free-will. Man's will yielded, and let sin abound, notwithstanding that he met with no resistance, but what he had power to conquer: whereas the more abundant grace of Christ conquer'd the heart of man, notwithstanding the resistance of his free-will, by moving him, as St. *Augustin* says somewhere, *to do willingly what he had a free-will to do.*

Thus far I have answer'd, I hope, to the satisfaction of all unprejudiced minds, the most material objections, which are, or can be, brought against the eternity of hell torments; and exploded the false and dangerous doctrine of a general restoration. Heaven forbid I should be so cruel to conceive any pleasure in the reflection on the endless torments of my fellow-creatures. No. Could I, without injuring the justice, truth, and mercy of my divine maker, change their eternal punishment into a temporal one; I should be as willing to do it as the most (pretendedly) compassionate of my adversaries. But must the divine attributes be reason'd away, to make room for unmerited, unaccepted, nay rejected compassion? Or will the asserting the torments of hell to be only temporal, suffice to make them so?

GOD has expressly acquainted us, that, when he takes away the impenitent with his stroke, a great ransom cannot deliver them; --- that he will judge them by the number of his years, *that is*, by his eternity; --- that the portion of their cup shall be fire and brimstone; an everlasting lake of fire and brimstone, which shall torment them for ever and ever; --- that he will take them off into it, in a whirlwind, living in his wrath, and as living as his wrath, and the fire kindled therein: And lest in our infirmity we should, with *David*, reflect on his mercy in so doing, he warns us not to lay too great a stress on his mercy alone, for that it is inseparable from his justice and truth. For tho' he is "slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy; yet his truth endureth to all generations, and both shall go inseparably before his face:" Inasmuch as he is ever, and in all respects, a just God, as well as a Saviour, and a false balance is as great an abomination to him, as a just weight is his delight. We are assured, that in the last day, when time shall cease, and eternity, fathomless eternity, take place; he will come to judge the good and bad: That the former shall rise to the resurrection of life, the latter to the resurrection of damnation: And that his judgment will be just, when he shall say to the former *Come, ye blessed, &c*; and to the latter *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire.* A dreadful sentence this, and so much the more so, as it will be the last sentence,

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which consequently can admit of no appeal. Yet, all dreadful as it is, is not GOD to be glorified in it for the equity of his judgment? Yes, surely he is, and for his mercy too.

What (at once) more equitable and merciful, than to render to every-one according to his work? GOD most liberally, without any interest to himself, created men free-agents, that they might be sharers in his eternal felicity, and enjoy happiness in their own right, by purchasing it of GOD. And to help them forward to this end, enter'd into a gracious covenant with them, in virtue of which they might become entitled to the bliss they were created for. And to induce them to fulfil their part of the covenant, and thereby lay his divine goodness under an ineffable tie of mercy and justice to fulfil his part, he promised eternal joy to their obedience, and threaten'd their disobedience with eternal woe: adding a sufficient portion of grace and means to win and allure this free-will to the better choice, and to wean it from preferring present precarious empty fleeting pleasures, to future, certain, solid and never ending joys. What more could a just GOD do? And what less could he do as a merciful one, than leave the free-will of man, whom he had thus strengthen'd, uncontroul'd in it's choice? If then, after all this, man inflexibly persists in preferring eternal wretchedness to eternal happiness; is it not equally merciful to sentence him to what he prefers? But how much brighter still does this mercy appear; when we see the divine bounty affording him fresh means of revoking his choice, by sacrificing his only son, and offering to accept his blood, as a mediation and atonement for the former obstinacy of man in rejecting the grace and means to salvation; which he might have made use of but rejected? What shall we say? when we see man obstinately bent to refuse this ineffable condescension? We must own, that his malice and perversity is an infinit insult to the infinit goodness of GOD, and that GOD shews himself a merciful being, in not controuling the obstinate wretch; and shews himself a just one in requiring the infinit satisfaction due for the infinit insult committed against him. And since that infinit satisfaction can be paid no other way than by infinit duration; the consequence will be, that it behoves GOD, as a just and merciful being, to decree the offender those eternal torments he has been pleas'd inflexibly to make choice of.

All the arguments brought to prove the contrary, tend only to destroy justice and Truth in GOD, or free-will in Man: Both which being more than visible absurdities, carry their own confutation with them. And the texts of scripture wrested against the orthodox doctrine of the eternity of hell-torments,

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ments, are such as only serve to confirm the belief of it: They tend on one hand to justify the Divine Mercy in inflicting them, by pointing out the *Patience of God*, and the *riches of his goodness*, which leads the wicked to *repentance*, by *forbearance*, *long-suffering*, and offering them efficacious means of *reconciliation*; and, on the other hand, render the *wicked inexcusable in despising the riches of his goodness*, and, *after their hardness and impenitent hearts, treasuring-up to themselves wrath unto the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds.*

And now, I presume, I have fully demonstrated the necessity of admitting the *eternity* of hell-torments to be perfectly conformable, not only with the justice and truth, but even with the mercy of God; and have proved the consistency of this doctrine by *revelation* from Scripture, according to the evident import of it's words, and the sense in which the Fathers have understood them; by *right reason*, from the nature of the *infinite offender*, of the *finite offender*, and of the *infinite satisfaction* due to the former from the latter; and, finally, by the very objections which our adversaries make against it.

How long then, O misguided triflers, will ye persist in your error? How long will ye shut the eyes of your understanding to the full-beaming rays of God's ineffable truth? And, how long will ye be cruel in the *false tenderness* of your mercies? Oh, say, Christians! Will you suffer the reasonableness of your faith to give way to the quibbles and absurdities of these enemies to truth and reason? Can you answer it to your own consciences, to join such a feeble troop in the attempt of pulling God, from his throne of judgment and justice, to set up the powers of vice in his stead, and give wickedness, rebellion and anarchy, a more extensive and irresistible dominion? No, rather let us glorify God in all his ways: Let us acknowledge the insufficiency of our understandings, to fathom his unsearchable mysteries: And, if, hitherto, we have conceived any notions unworthy so adorable a being; let us confess our infirmity with *David*. With him, let us praise and magnify thee, and gratefully own, that *unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou renderest to every-one according to his work.*

What then, Christians, remains for us to do, but seriously to weigh the consequences flowing from these infallible truths? The horror, with which you ought to look down on the miseries of a future, unhappy state, sufficiently appears from the extraordinary pains which evil men take in attempting to argue away the *eternity* of them. Why all this labour to disprove the *eternity* of hell-

torments? Can it arise from any other source than a corroding consciousness of deserving them? When a man, in any pursuit, is in danger of what he cannot conceive without dread and dismay; if he will continue his career, he has but one of these two means, to have recourse to either, to remove the danger, or to lessen his fears. Hence, when a man, in the search of pleasures, forbidden by his Maker, reflects on the terrors of a future state consequential to his lawless pursuit; what has he to do, but, either to remove the danger by relinquishing that pursuit, or to lull his fears by lessening the idea of the object which creates them? Thus *wicked men*, who are inflexibly bent on their pleasures, will not make choice of the former, and, therefore must have recourse to the latter. Punishments, they are sure, will, one day, be their portion; and very severe ones. The voice of guilt, loudly sounding in their conscience, with perpetual dings, leaves them no room to doubt of it. But then, those punishments are future ones, of an undetermined nature; and are not so obvious to their senses as the present pleasures they have in view; and, therefore not so striking. What then have they to do? Relinquish their pursuit, and remove the danger, they will not: Pursue their pleasures while the terrors of such, and so certain, punishments, stare them in the face, they cannot: This terror, therefore, is to be destroy'd, by changing the idea of it's object. While they look upon the miseries, they fear, as *eternal, everlasting, and without end*; their reason, however corrupt, tells them, that *fleeting pleasures* cannot be worth pursuing at the expence of *eternal wretchedness*: And, as the will cannot embrace any object, nor come to any choice without direction from the mind; they are kept in suspense between the inflexibly fancied good, and the dreaded evil. But, as soon as the terrifying consideration of *eternity* is removed from the idea of those miseries; the terror vanishes along with it: *Fleeting miseries* are not strong enough to deter them from the pursuit of *fleeting pleasures*: These are present, determin'd and striking: Those, but future, undetermin'd, and unable to strike the senses, because not obvious to them: And, therefore, that the will, irrevocably bent on the violation of God's laws, in the pursuit of forbidden pleasures in spite of all his promises and threats, may not be stop't in it's career; corrupt reason is call'd-in to it's aid, in order to remove every idea of the *eternity* of hell-torments in favour of vice.

Such are the wretched grounds on which are rais'd the batteries against the *eternity* of hell-torments. But, alas, how indiscreetly do the wicked act! Since the *eternity* of these torments is so horrible to them to conceive; why will they not rather destroy both the miserable *eternity*, and the miseries.

miserics of it, by destroying, in themselves, that wickedness which may, otherwise, be the cause of both? Must they not be obliged to own this a more effectual and surer way of doing it, than by barely attempting to destroy the belief of it? Whether those torments are to be *eternal* or not; sure they are, that they will be proportion'd to their crimes, and inexpressibly greater than the pleasure those crimes are capable of giving. But, if they should be, as it evidently appears they must be, *eternal*; how wretched will not their case be; when sad experience shall, with feeling, dreadfully feeling demonstration, convince them of their error! How will not they then wish, and wish in vain, that they had not suffer'd their minds to be beguiled by the corruption of their hearts! And how, alas, will they curse the time, when they deluded themselves and others, by attempting to disprove the *eternity* of those torments, which, irrevocable, immutable, *eternal* justice, forces them (but, ah, too late!) to own and feel, without remedy, without measure, and without end! What will quibbles then avail them? Will they serve to remove their miseries, or revoke their sentence? No, they will only serve to redouble their wretchedness, by adding to it the society of others, whom their illusions shall contribute to make as wretched as themselves.

Notwithstanding the universal belief of all ages, nations and religions, in the *eternity* of miseries allotted to the wicked; some men are so irrevocably bent on vice, as not to be thereby deterr'd from committing evil. How much wider then will not wickedness spread it's dominion; should the dangerous, daring doctrine prevail, which asserts those miseries not to be *eternal*? Some, indeed, there are, it is to be hoped, virtuous enough to pursue the dictates of conscience and religion, independently on any fears of *eternal* torments, spirited by a more generous love and gratitude to their Maker and Redeemer. But how many more are not there among the degenerate race of mankind, whom nothing less than an *eternity* of punishments will deter from offending him? They, whom an *eternity* of torments will not restrain from committing some insults against God, would refrain from none, were those torments to be changed into *temporal*. And those whom nothing but *eternal* misery can keep in order, how shall *temporal* punishment render subject to God's laws? What an endless multiplication of sins and sinners must necessarily ensue then; should the scandalous system of a general

restoration, in defiance of eternal truth and justice, obtain credit?

But, surely, O beloved fellow-creatures, you will shew yourselves more worthy of that grace, that reason, and that good sense, with which Heaven has endow'd you, than to subject it to absurdity? Surely, O Christians, you will shew yourselves more grateful to your God than to rob him of his power, to bestow it on vice? Shall the almighty Creator have made man out of nothing, to be *eternally* happy; and not have a right to punish him infinitely for infinitely insulting, instead of serving, him? Christians! If you have any sense of gratitude in you; you will not allow that a worm, a reptil, a nothing, shall dare to insult this infinit Being, without deserving an infinit punishment. Shall you, in return for his having made you what you are, attempt to make him less than what he is? Shall you, to screen a rebellious insect from the infinit punishment he deserves for the infinit insult he has inflexibly persisted in against his Maker, divest God of that immutable truth and justice which are inseparable from his mercy? Heavens forbid! The littleness and contemptibility of the offender, rather enhance than excuse the guilt of his offence. So much the more diminutive the person, who dares offend this infinit Being, and so much the more dependent he is on this Being; so much the greater malice, arrogance and guilt, that littleness argues in the offender. For, however frail he be by nature; God has provided him with sufficient means to raise him above the frailty of nature. This then is more than sufficient to render every criminal inexcusable, who inflexibly persists in offending him; and to vindicate the divine mercy, from every shadow of cruelty, in punishing, with *eternal* torments, the infinit malice of crimes, committed in defiance of his grace. Ah, let us never, therefore, presume to harbour the least thought of siding with such malicious offenders against so lenitive a judge. No: Rather let us praise and glorify this equitable, merciful judge, as well in the *eternal* torments he inflicts on the wicked, as in the never-ending felicity he bestows on the good. Yes, we will: O just and gracious God. We will magnify thee in thy deeds without ceasing: We will give thee glory, praise, and thanks without measure? And will own aloud, that unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: For thou renderest to every man according to his work.

THE
P A S S I O N
OF OUR
Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST:
A
S E R M O N
ON
G O O D - F R I D A Y.

Preach'd (with some little Variation of Words) in the YEAR 1738, and
every YEAR since: This present One included.

THE THIRD EDITION.



IN O S S A

Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST:

IN O M R E S



G O O D - I - R A Y

with some little Variation of Words in the YEAR 1713 and every YEAR since: This present One included.

THE THIRD EDITION



SERMON

Vol. IV

S E R M O N

On GOOD-FRIDAY.



In the Name of the FATHER,
And of the SON,
And of the HOLY-GHOST.

BUT! Where is the SON?—The eternal Father had a Son; a dear, an only, Son: This, to our joy, we know. For *in this bath the charity of God appear'd among us, that he sent down his only begotten Son into the world that we may live by him.** What then became of this God's dear, God's only Son?—Alas, Christians! he laid down his precious life, that life so necessary for us to live by: In short, he was assassinated.—The Son of God assassinated? Stupendous paradox! The author of our life, deceased! Can it be possible?—Yes: Witness celestial regions! Earth and Hell! Do ye bear witness, that the author of our beings, to rescue from eternal woe our life, laid down his own. Too well; too well, to your sorrow, do ye know it: For, *now is the judgment of the world;* (of thee, oh earth!) *Now shall the prince of this world (even thou, oh Lucifer! be cast forth.*†—Unheard of mystery! But when did this sovereign source of life dry-up? When did this our soul-creating breath depart?—At the ninth hour.—For whom did he part with a life so precious?—Ah! for us, his useless creatures; for us poor, worthless, vile, enormous (and to say all in one) ungrateful sinners.—How then did he part with that dear, invaluable life?—Inhumanly mangled on a shameful cross.—Oh abyss of uninvestigable mysteries! Who, and what was this mangled Author of our lives?—Already I have told you: The eternal Son of an eternal Father, the spotless Lamb of God; his Self, both perfect God and perfect man.—Heavens! What monsters then were his executioners?

* St. John iv. 1.

† St. John xii. 31.

—Our iniquities.—Was there no cause then in him, for which he was condemn'd to slaughter?—Yes.—Although his enemies had none to allege; although the very judge, who sentenced him, could find none in him; the cause was obvious. His spotless innocence, and ardent love for us, were the unpardonable crimes, which render'd him obnoxious to the world.—Horror! keep back: Too early do'st thou rush upon us! Say: How was this sacrilegious slaughter, this daring decide, effected?—Ah, Heavens! What shall I answer? Where shall I find the faculty of speech, while I contemplate how the eternal Word once lost the use of his.

Yet, brethren, speak I must and will, whatever struggles it may cost me, to tell you how your gracious God and mine was butcher'd. This is the melancholy tale I have so often invited you to hear, and promised to relate. To-day the honour of the injured deity demands it of me: To-day the piety of your impatience calls for it: To-day the same zealous wishes for your eternal welfare, which heretofore prompted me to rouse your expectation, bid me gratify it, in spite of all the yearnings of a breast brim-full of woe. Oh fortitude! be faithful, at this juncture, when *the waters of a just distress have enter'd-in even to my soul.** Keep back the flood of pity pouring in upon me, that I may pass dry-eyed through this red sea of sorrows. Oh resolution! if ever thou was't needful to me, it is now; when I must view my God (and even shew him to these poor sympathizing Christians) expiring with excess of pain, yet not expire myself. Oh, my sad heart! what wrongs has't thou ever done me, that I should thus resolve to lord it over thy too justified affliction, by forcing thee, with more than savage cruelty, to stifle all thy tenderness, and bleed

* Psalm lxxviii. 1.

in silent anguish? Must thou, in punishment of all thy past revolts, be now debarr'd the common privilege, which every sinful breast, but thine, enjoys, of drowning former guilt in present tears? While every part of nature, else, is now indulg'd the harmless bent of feeding hungry grief with penitential groans; must thou, sole tyrant over thy own being, imprison all thy sorrows to set this tongue at liberty?

What can we behold (let me look round) which does not call aloud rather for tears than words. The Heavens, in their way, excite us to general mourning: The sun itself, on this day, cloath'd itself with the mantle of gloom, in a solemn eclipse: And all nature seem'd wedded to sorrow. The soul of every thinking Christian, overwhelm'd with concern, is still at liberty to vent that concern in a flood of tribulation: And to warrant the silent eloquence of all her children's tears, at this holy season the holy Church, my sacred weeping mother, gives us to understand, by her sad, mute solemnities, that her eternal spouse, her sole beloved, breathed-out his lovely soul upon a shameful gibbet, between a couple of thieves, in sight of a tumultuous, numerous populace, amidst all the outrages of a harden'd band of blood-thirsty butchers; reviled and scoffed at, and blasphemed by men, and, even, seem'd by God himself forsaken. And, yet, my function (oh cruel function!) from the midst of my silenced fellow mourners singles me out (as if alone flinted into insensibility) to add to their public sadness (while suppressing the effects of my own) by distinctly and publicly proclaiming in the ears of all,

The PASSION of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

To-day the voice of gratitude, the universal cry of sympathizing nature, demands that, all the mournful murmurs, which the deepest woe can dictate, should wholly be devoted to the solemn anguish of this, our suffering, injured Lord and Friend, and Father and Redeemer; else, how might not the share I claim, in his distresses, prompt me to resent this tyrant task my sacerdotal character imposes on me, of trampling on all the soft emotions of my soul? For, surely, I am no less a child, of that lamenting spouse, whose widow'd love, you, brethren, are indulg'd the liberty of consoling, by joining, in sighs, with her, to bewail this our common loss? Surely, I am no less the purchase of this dear, butcher'd parent than you, who are allow'd the leave to bedew his sacred corse with your tears? If I (as well as you are) am all over bloody with the wounds, which our common crimes have heap'd on this innocent Lamb from head to foot; why may not I share along with you, an equal

portion in the inebriating chalice of his Passion? Why may not I *mingle my drink with my tears*, * with liquid pity, and to the precious sea of Mercies flowing upon me from those wounds, join the torrent of compunction swelling in my bosom? Why? ---but that, while the dire remembrance of my former perfidy impels me to weep, the Office (*once more let me say*, oh cruel office!) of priest and preacher compels me to speak.

If then there be among us one harden'd heart not even as yet dispos'd to melt with pity at poor Jesus's distress; ah, may this tongue become, like *Moses's rod*, † the means of forcing from that flinted breast a source of waters! And you, mean while, already melted Christians! even give entire scope to your compassion. You, oh innocents! lament the injuries done to the Author of your grace: You, oh guiltful! bewail your own perverseness, which so injuriously misused him. Weep every one over him: Weep for yourselves; and, since I may not pay my grief the tribute of one present falling tear; be you the proxies of my tenderness and kindly weep for me. *You may buy waters at free-cost.* ‡ You are not brought to the melancholy hardship of the *Jews of Babylon*, reduced to purchase the very streams of their own fountains at the price of gold. Neither are you (thank God!) in the same wretched necessity of paying taxes for your grief, as that rejected nation was after the destruction of *Jerusalem*: That *Jerusalem* which their own *Judaic* perfidy more than the triumphant arms of the *Romans*, made desolate. Just judgment of insulted Heaven! ---That an enormity without example, and a deicide, without remorse, might be punish'd with an evil without remedy, and a rigour without mercy; the scatter'd remains of those *Jews*, who escaped from the flames of that once holy place, were loaden by their conquerors, not only with chains on their limbs, but even with shackles on their wishes, and forbidden, under pain of death, to return at any time after, to view, tho' from afar off, the ruinous remains of their depopulated country. However, whether it be that ingratitude to God, by long repeated practice, had become a second nature to them; or, whether the strong resemblance of marble to the inflexible obduracy of their hearts produced a predominance of sympathy between the one and the others; they, whom no endearments could excite to the love of the Author of their temple, could by no consideration of grievances or convenience be wean'd from the affection they bore to the temple itself. For as well after they became faithless, as while they remain'd faithful, *the very stones of it pleas'd them*: § And the love of the noble ruin still lived in

* *Psalms* ci. 10. † *Exodus* xvii. 6. ‡ *Isaiah* v. 1.

§ *Psalms* ci. 15.

the hearts of that reprov'd, dejected people, descending from father to son: A painful inheritance of hungry desires, never to be appeas'd but by feasting their eyes with the sight of it. Hence, were they, at length, reduced to the solitary solace of purchasing, with an annual, exorbitant tribute, the grant of going once a year, under a strong guard, to weep over the dust of the dear-loved city, on the day it had been destroy'd by *Vespasian's* army. Thither then, from every quarter, did they annually gather, in melancholy multitudes, on the fatal day, to feed their despair with the dearly-purchased aliment of a yearly renew'd horror, in seeing their property possess'd by strangers, their altars laid waste, their temples over-thrown, their sanctuary polluted, their liberty lost, their laws violat'd, their mysteries abolish'd, and their enemies riotously triumphant over their fathers tombs. And, as if distress had been a desirable good, how did not they hoard-up each precious instant of those few hours granted them, to spend it in sighs and sobs, and groans and tears, and lamentations and grief! In so much that, when their keepers, with the departing sun, prepared to part them from the fondled idol of their affliction, it is hard to decide which were the most eager, the ruffians in exacting, or they in lavishing, immoderate sums of money for ever minute's leisure of lamenting beyond the stated time. Equitable retaliation of vengeance on a generation so base, as, for the favour of one *Cæsar*, to sell the real joy of the rest of mankind; that by another *Cæsar* (not unprovidentially surnamed *the delight of human nature*) they should be reduced to purchase, at an extravagant price, the very liberty of venting their own sorrows; and thus literally fulfill the prophetic sense of *Jeremiah's* complaint: * *Our own water* (the very water of our tears) *we have drank for money.*

Oh, beloved faithful: This, this day is the mournful anniversary of that too fatal period, when our own perfidy, in concert with the *Jewish* treachery, laid waste the beauteous sanctuary of all grace and glory; the loving, lovely, sacred human form of the divine JESUS CHRIST made man for the love of man. This the melancholy day on which all thankful, faithful Christians, fired with filial love and grateful resentment, gather together, publicly, to express their inbred horror and soul's detestation of the barbarous parricide; by weeping over the venerable ruin wrought by human baseness; by mentally numbering over, one by one, the wounds of assassinated JESUS; and glutting their contrite hearts with the waters of a just compunction, in sight of his dear, disfigured relics. For this pious purpose, behold us all united here! --But ah! Where are those sacred relics? Alas!

* *Lament. v. 4.*

let me turn my eyes whither ever I list, I discover nothing of him. His sacred altars are stript; his tabernacles void; and not even in his favourite darling retreat, the bosom of the faithful, is he this day to be found. Ah! Where then, or to what purpose shall we seek him; when, as the prophet bears witness, * *he was cut off from the land of the living?* And with such violence is he ravish'd from our sight, that he is no where to be found among us upon earth, this day, but in his faint resemblance, a crucifix. Alas! Where then are all our tears amidst this irreparable loss? How comes it that every Christian cheek is dry, while there is so much cause to weep. You, beloved, may purchase *gratis* the streams of a liquid concern, your sorrow need not thirst in vain after tears, for want of money to buy them a free passage. No; says *ISAIAH*: † *All ye, who thirst, come to the waters: and you, who have no silver, make haste and buy them without money and without any exchange.* Give then free vent to your passion, Christians! And you, my eyes, no longer stem the tide of your affliction. For ah! what use can this tongue find for words upon a day, when no language can have force but that of weeping eyes? Alas, tortured Saviour! could I but now, as heretofore, behold thee triumphantly sacramented on that altar, dictating to me, like a master from his chair, kindling my zeal, inspiring my thoughts and giving courage to my labours, I would attempt to preach thee. Yes: *I would declare thy name to my brethren: In the midst of this church I would praise thee.* But! Now thou art ravish'd from me, where shall I find the spirits to support me? Now, that I hear, methinks all nature dinning in my ears (*Where is thy GOD?*)---what shall I answer? Whither shall I run in search of succour; in search of power even to speak?---To thee, eternal father?---But is it not thy dear and only Son my crimes have butcher'd? If upon this day thou couldst abandon even him; how shall I presume to sue to thee for succour?---Or, shall I have recourse to thee, oh dolorous Mother of my GOD? Wilt thou, oh martyr'd Queen of Heaven, consent that I renew this melancholy tale? Ah no! Too cruel was the sword of grief which pierced thy soul before.---Celestial spirits! Angelic choirs! I expect not your relief. You stand in need yourselves of all your Glory to support the horrid scene.

Ah! how seasonably then do'st thou meet my thoughts, oh, sacred, dear and venerable Cross? "Hail, precious cross! long-wish'd-for cross! and now most welcome to my anxious soul! receive me, a disciple of him who hung upon thee, my master, Christ. Thou wast the mystic throne

* *Isaiab liii. 8.*

† *Ibid. chap. lv. 1.*

‡ *Psal. xxi. 23.*

“ on which he chose to signalize his mercy : Since
 “ made the humble bed on which he breathed his
 “ last. And now this pious audience, here in thy
 “ temple devoutly gather’d round thee, with
 “ zealous ardour of a just impatience, waits till I
 “ unfold the melancholy series of those cruel tor-
 “ tures which his prodigious love urged him to
 “ endure, ere he sigh’d out his lovely, loving soul
 “ in thy embraces.—To thee then let me cling.
 “ On thee stretch’d-out, in spirit, let me imbibe
 “ the invaluable drops of blood he left thee moist-
 “ ened with : That, strengthen’d with the salutary
 “ balm, I may refrain those tears, which other-
 “ wise could not but interrupt my utterance. Re-
 “ pel the dread which grows upon me at every
 “ step, as I advance the nearer to my subject : A
 “ dread not caused by the eclipsing sun, nor split-
 “ ting rocks, nor trembling nature, but by the
 “ death of Jesus. This (ah ! only this) the sub-
 “ ject of my hope, is the just matter of my ter-
 “ rors. And how shall I forbear to apprehend,
 “ both for myself and audience, when preparing to
 “ preach a tragedy, which needs must make us all,
 “ but so much the more criminal, if we make not
 “ a right use of it ; and increase our condemnation,
 “ if it work not our conversion ? Oh then, thou
 “ mystic sign of *TAV* ! strike our stony breasts, and
 “ melt them to compunction. But if there be one
 “ sinner here so obstinate, as to persist in a disposi-
 “ tion to hear, unmoved, his Saviour’s bitter Pas-
 “ sion ; shake all his senses with such inbred hor-
 “ ror as may compel him to withdraw from hence,
 “ ere I begin : For all, all I have henceforth to say,
 “ shall only serve to one in such a disposition to
 “ augment his guilt, and swell his punishment.
 “ Or rather, ah ! shock him into true Conversion.
 “ Convert us all, and me the first of all, exciting
 “ us to glory in nought but Christ and him cruci-
 “ fied. Oh Cross ! be thou my only eloquence :
 “ Be all the life of my discourse. Thee let me
 “ plant in every heart around me. This, oh sacred
 “ Tree is all the help and all the hope thou can’st
 “ to day afford me. And to this end, Thee, oh
 “ sacred mystery of the Cross, profoundly I adore.
 “ Hail, precious Cross, our solitary hope in this
 “ sad time of sufferance ! Strengthen our piety
 “ with increase of grace, and purify us from our
 “ former guilt. AMEN.

ENOUGH had generous Jesus done, during
 the space of thirty years, of holy, exemplary
 life : Enough in other three of zealous, indefatiga-
 ble mission (fill’d up with sanctity and prodigies)
 towards saving, if possible, the wilfully reprobate
 race of *Israel* : And time it was now to gratify his
 pious impatience for the redemption of his beloved
 elect. Yes, *Father* ! (says this Lord of Love) Fa-

* *St. John xvii. 1, 2.*

*ther ! the hour is come : Glorify thy Son, that thy
 Son may glorify thee : As thou has’t given him pow-
 er over all flesh ; give him an absolute power over
 his own ; that with this flesh, as with a sin-offer-
 ing, he may appease thy wrath : and recall thy
 mercy upon all men ; and all which thou has’t giv-
 en to him, to them he may give Life everlasting.*

*When Jesus then had said this, he went forth
 with his disciples beyond the torrent CEDRON,
 where was a garden into which he enter’d, and
 his disciples with him.* But what had Jesus to
 do there ? Did he go thither to complete that tri-
 umph he so lately had begun in Jerusalem ? Did
 he go thither to be honour’d with garlands of
 flowers, with coronets of laurel-leaves, with wreaths
 of olive branches, with a diadem of glory ? No :
 But Jesus went thither to subject that flesh, which
 he had received in gift from his Virgin Mother, to
 every excess of pain ; and that pain was to become
 the matter of his glory. This he had made a ne-
 cessary condition to his own glorification. This he
 had gloried in on mount *Thabor* ; conversing with
Moses and *Elias* concerning his excess in Jerusa-
 lem : This was appointed the efficient instrument
 of his endlessly glorious reign : And this, though
 pregnant with nothing but shame in the means, was
 big with unspeakable glory in it’s end. Now was
 the illustrious period of his concluding his mystic
 wedding with his spotless spouse, our Holy Mo-
 ther the Church. Now was the occasion when he
 made to himself a portable throne of the wood of
Libanus. † (O the mysterious throne ! the pillars,
 or arms whereof, were, by his spotless innocence,
 made candid as the purest silver ; the seat of it rich
 as the most refined gold, with his sacred wounds ;
 the going-up of it purpled all over with his inesti-
 mable blood ; and the midst of it overspread with
 charity for the daughters of Jerusalem. O Chris-
 tian souls then ! O costly purchasers of this eter-
 nal Salomon ! Daughters of Sion ! sally forth and
 see him in the diadem wherewith his mother has
 crown’d him on the day of his espousal, on the day
 of the joy of his heart. Come forth and let us pass
 over the mountain of myrror to the little hill of
 frankincense ; from the racks he endured in his soul
 amidst this agony, to the tortures he bore in his
 body amidst his Passion. But ah ! What shall we
 see in the bodily passion of Christ to come-up to
 these sufferings of soul which he vouchsafed to sub-
 mit to in this spiritual conflict ? Sufferings so much
 the more exquisitely cruel than any thing he could
 undergo in his limbs, as the soul is more noble than
 the body, and the conflicts of the spirit are inex-
 pressibly greater and more acute than those of the
 flesh. And this, perhaps, was one reason why our*

* *St. John xviii. 1.* † *Cantic. iii. 9.* to the end.
 divine

divine Hero would suffer so much in spirit at *Gethsemani*; that, by the rudeness of this internal greater conflict, he might so fortify and enure himself to sufferings, as to be better able afterwards to undergo the lesser evils he was preparing to meet at *Jerusalem* and *Golgotha*. But why do I say *lesser* where nothing was little, but all was immeasurably great? So great that, as the sole immensity of his power is able to appoint difference of degrees between infinit and infinit, so only the omnipotence of his love could have found means on this occasion, previously to exceed with so sweet an excess the unmeasured infinity of evils, he afterwards underwent during his passion in the flesh; as our following him through every state of it will best make us conceive.

So then, beloved Christians, our love and our life, the divine JESUS CHRIST, after putting an end to that supper, which was the last of his mortal state, and the final proof of his exuberant charity; after recommending to his eternal Father his abandon'd disciples; after instilling fresh courage into them by feeding them with his precious body and blood, and washing their feet with the tenderest love and profoundest humility; after returning thanks to God, and singing a hymn of heavenly praise to him, sets out to begin his bitter, bitter passion: And the first step he takes is to pass the torrent *Cedron*, to agonize in the garden of *Gethsemani*. Thither *Judas* was preparing to go, that he might deceive and betray Jesus: Thither therefore does Jesus haste, that he may not deceive or disappoint *Judas*. Adam in one garden had deliver'd up himself, and in himself all human nature, a voluntary captive to sin: Therefore did Jesus chuse, in another garden, to begin the restoration of him and his offspring to the perfect liberty of grace. In a word, as the first Adam wrought the destruction of the world in the garden of *Eden*, the Second Adam thought proper to commence it's redemption in the garden of *Olivet*. That as, in the former, Death and the Devil had laid the first foundation of their destructive empire; so, in the latter, both might receive the first shock of that victory which was effectually to overthrow their dominion. But ah, the unequal difference between the two gardens! That was a paradise of delights: This an orchard of sorrows. There all was charming to the sight: Here every thing terrifying to the senses. There flourish'd the tree of life: Here grow the fruits of death. There was heard the voice of God walking in the afternoon air: Here might be beheld the Son of God sorrowfully prostrate to the ground in the chill of the night. There the first man was absorb'd in unspeakable pleasures: Here the Lord of men and an-

* *Genesis* iii. 8.

gels was overwhelm'd with unutterable sadness and dismay. In short *there* smoothly ran within their bidden channels recreating rivers of water: Here violently issued forth of it's natural limits an excruciating extravasation of sweat and blood. What shall I say? So strange is the disorder into which this melancholy comparison throws my fluctuating thoughts that I should fear being lost to my self, amidst the crowd of sad reflections which pour-in upon my mind; if I did not, in order to follow my Saviour through his sufferings, resolve to conduct this discourse by the very same flames, with which my divine Lord chose to conduct his passion and pains. By the track then of his adorable footsteps let me steer my sorrowful contemplative course over the too fordable torrent *Cedron*.

But ah, at the first setting out, how does not the horror of the way dishearten and terrify me! Who would have thought, Christians, from the Words of the Gospel that we had any thing worse than a torrent to pass over: Whereas if we propose to follow Jesus, behold we have a wide Ocean to traverse! Well, O my Saviour! Well did'st thou, by the prophetic mouth of thy *Psalmist*, * express this first step of thine into thy bitter Passion: *I came into the depth of the sea, and a Tempest has overwhelm'd me.* Yes: A sea of sorrows indeed was the passion of Jesus. And ah how dreadfully beset with quick-sands and rocks and shelves! How cruelly agitated with storms and tempests and furious Hurricanes, from the treachery of *Judas* and the cowardice and indolence of his other Disciples; from the Cruelty of the *Jews*; from the barbarity of the *Gentils*; from the iniquity of his judges! But ah how much more severely still from the Sadness Tears and Terrors admitted, nay, invited into and let loose within his own divine breast. For—This our generous Lord (as if able no longer to wait the slow approach of his wish'd-for tormenters) before he deliver'd up his Body into the hands of his butchers, would needs deliver up his Spirit into his own. And as all our guilt took it's rise from the seat of thinking; therefore would he, to destroy that guilt, give the first beginning to his sufferings by the martyrdom of thought: Thus anticipating the barbarity of his judges and executioners, by becoming the voluntary judge and torturer of his own mind.

It seems not at first any very rigorous Idea of the passion of Christ, that Jesus should be deliver'd up into his own hands, and abandon'd to himself, to be the executioner of his own person. For if those divine hands, as we well know, are a merciful refuge for the most miserable of Wretches and even for the guiltiest of criminals; how shall innocence itself meet there with rigour and severity?

* *Psalms* lxxviii. 3.

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But be pleased to observe, Christians, that, as the first Chastisement which the divine equity decreed for our guilty parents was to leave them to themselves that they themselves might be their first torturers, and the remorse of their conscience the first punishment of their sin and the first effect of his vengeance: Thus too would the divine JESUS be the first to torment himself, that, having undertaken to satisfy for their and our guilt, his satisfaction might bear some proportion with the former penalty. O my blessed Redeemer! methinks, I see the excess of thy love become the secret sacrificer of thee, leading thee as an innocent victim to the altar and chusing the sable gloom of the night, the better to compleat the sacrifice: Whether because all nature appear'd in solemn mourning, and that time of silence and obscurity seem'd more calculated for promoting terror and dismay; or because the senses not being dissipated by external objects, the spirit is better able to retreat into itself and act with greater vigour against itself. In the heart of JESUS CHRIST there were two different parts; the one the *superior* part, which enjoy'd the beatific vision of GOD; the other the *inferior* part, which was capable of the ordinary innocent passions of man, or as St. JEROM styles them in Christ, the *vice passions*; * because never out-running Reason, but ever moving in a perfect subjection to the freedom of it's upright dictates. Thus in his sacred soul was there an ineffable mixture of Heaven and of the earth: over both which presided his infinit love. And by the appointment of this infinit love it was that, with one hand he stop'd the tide of glory in the superior part of his spirit, by suspending that influence of the beatific vision which otherwise must naturally overflow every faculty of his soul: While with the other hand he gave the reins to every guiltless passion which could afflict him with grief, dismay, sadness, fears and terrors: And, as the *Evangelists* express it, *he began to be afraid, † and weary and sad. ‡* Behold then this victim of love, after sequestering (as St. *Ambrose* expresses it) every comfort which his divine nature could supply him with, giving full loose to every innocent passion which could torment him as man. And the first passion which tortured him was a cruel fear which tore him with such violence, that had this been all the suffering Christ had to endure; his suffering would still have been without limits.

Oh what a merciless tyrant is the passion of Fear! Ingenious to the full as it is cruel, with a kind of malignant foresight it runs tracing the inmost most secret foldings of futurity to turn all into matter of torment for human intellects: And besides creating and oftentimes giving reality to evils, which but

* *Pro-passiones.* † St. Mat. xxvi. 37.

‡ St. Mark xiv. 33.

for our terrors would never have had any other existence than in the imagination, it frequently has recourse to fiction to oppress us with grievances which never did nor will exist. However, was it content, with the Cruelty of figuring to our fancy the evils it threatens us with, in their real and genuine colours; it's tyranny were less insupportable: Although it would still be true that the dread of evils is equally as tormenting as the evils we dread. But, what is worse! Like a faithless impostor it exaggerates danger; and, not satisfied with sending the Soul to encounter the dreaded evil; it forces the very evil to intrude itself into the Soul with redoubled horror. We have an instance of this from the book of *Numbers*, and a lively one too, in the scouts whom the Children of *Israel* dispatch'd from their camp in the desert, to take a survey of the *Land of Promise*. They went; but unseasonable cruel fear going with them, who would imagine it?—That delightful country flowing with milk and honey, was, in their imagination, disfigured into a nation of horrible monsters, it's verdant fruitful gardens and meadows into pestiferous marshes and fens, fertile in nothing but poisons and vermin: Their panic metamorphos'd it's inhabitants into giants and themselves into insects: In short there was not a foot of that land of pleasures but what to their frightened fancy abounded in horrors: Witness the account they brought back to their astonish'd Brethren: "The land which we have survey'd, say they, devoureth it's inhabitants: The people whom we saw are of a tall stature, certain monsters of the giant-kind, to whom being compared we appear'd but mere locusts." And whence could proceed so strange a disorder in the judgment but from an error in the fancy, the fraudulent work of fear? Now if objects which in themselves are not only no evils but real goods, can assume so terrible an aspect and cause so much horror when beheld in a panic; ah what anguish, dearest JESUS, must not thy tender soul have felt from the bitter images of thy passion with which thou wast pre-occupied by officious fear! For what alas had JESUS to behold in this killing contemplation? Was it, perhaps, a Land of Promise, a terrestrial paradise his thoughts were surveying; where a constant unchangeable fragrant verdancy of smiling nature, gaily sporting amidst the luxuriance of sprightly flowers and blooming fruits, join spring, autumn in one continued season of innocent delights? Ah no! *Jerusalem, Jerusalem* was the fatal object of his sadden'd thoughts: That *Jerusalem* which was to be the tragic fear of all his unmerited sorrows. And what had he to behold there? Alas all he could see was spittings and buffets and bruises and ill-usage: He saw his cords, his scour-

* Numbers xiii. 33. 34.

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ges, his thorns, and hammers and nails and spear: He saw scoffs, revilings, blasphemies, ignominy, crosses and death. Oh sadden'd Jesus! What did'st thou not foresee of all which is cruel? What did'st thou not apprehend of all which could torment thee? So killing was the Pre-presentation of all this complication of horrors that we may truly say, without saying too much, that as the passion of Christ, while he endured it, surpass'd every other martyrdom, so did the fear of that passion, in his agony, exceed his very passion itself; and, enhanced in acuteness by his lively foreknowledge, made such dreadful havock of his sacred frame as might almost give the title of mercy to the barbarity of his executioners.

What shall we say then, or be able to conceive; which is capable of giving us an adequate Idea of the exquisite torture, which the sadness, he also gave an innocent loose to added to, the bitter effects of his fears? Had our divine Lord given no other symptoms of the inward affliction of his spirit; that which he gave to his apostles was sufficient to make us comprehend that his anguish must be beyond bounds: Since it compell'd a God to complain and say: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.* * What else could he mean in this moving expression than to insinuate to his disciples, that the sadness of heart which the foresight of his sufferings threw him into was so severe, that he was beginning to die with the vehemence of it? Or mehap would he have them to know, that this very bitterness of soul would alone have been sufficient to kill him, but that he miraculously preserved his life for farther torments. Oh my too sorrowful JESUS! Oh that thou had'st but some kindly object to divert thee from so destructive a thought! Oh for some seasonable intrusion to break-in upon thy mind, and not suffer all the horrors of *Golgotha* to overwhelm thee amidst the gaieties of *Gethsemani*! Arise then, gentle Saviour, arise: No more, prostrate on the ground, continue to give a loose to these self-tormenting griefs. But alas! Am I awake or in a dream, when I hear my Saviour courting his disciples to stand by him? *Stay here and watch with me:* --- does he say? † Poor Jesus! So then even this weakest of our weaknesses thy terrors and griefs reduced thee to, of not even daring to be safe (when safest) alone; and (as it were) like an infant which starts at it's shadow, not caring to trust thyself to thyself? Yet ah sweetest object of my love! Still art thou left all alone, to encounter thy fears to struggle with thy griefs. Thou, who would'st thus purposely take upon thee all our infirmities; must have no one to buoy thee up amidst thy weaknesses. Thy disciples, so far from having eyes to weep over thee, have none to

watch with thee. All alone thou art left; and had'st thou remain'd so, how much less had not thy sufferings been? For ah! what was the end of thy solitude, but the commencement of thy chains. From company what but evils had'st thou to expect? What relief could'st thou hope to receive? In thy blessed mother there was nothing but condolence and sympathy to redouble thy griefs: In thy apostles nothing but inconstancy to flee from thee, or daringness to disown thee, or treachery to betray thee. Ah! from whom then or where should'st thou expect any comfort in a night, in a garden; which, fruitful in repose and rich in delights for every one besides, had nought to afford thee but dangers and dreads! Go then once more, afflicted Lord; and prostrate before him who alone is able to afford thee relief, force down the succour of thy eternal Father with the vigour of thy prayers with the vehemence of thy tears and complaints. "Oh my divine Father! (methinks I hear him saying with a loud cry and many tears, as St. Paul represents him: *) O my divine " Father: Whom: " I behold stretching-out to me the inebriating " Chalice of my bitter sufferings, behold how I " languish at the foresight of it! What tho' thou " be resolv'd on my death; still art thou my Fa- " ther, and still will I call thee so. *Oh my Father* " then! *If it be possible; let this Chalice pass from* " *me.* † If so the laws of thy provident justice " require that I must die; let it not be with " drinking this too bitter Cup: No, decree some " milder less inglorious death; a death more " becoming the life of a God. *Father! If it be* " *possible; let this Chalice pass from me.*"

Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou: continues Christ. ‡ And from these last Words, it is evident that the petition of Jesus, great as his fear and sadness were, was not an absolute demand; proceeding from any efficacy of desire to escape his future passion. No: Jesus, I have already observed; had the perfect liberty to die, notwithstanding the precept of his divine Father: inasmuch as he was free to ask a release from his death, and the eternal Father disposed to grant him whatever he should ask with efficacy of will. Jesus then was not here diffidently asking any thing opposit to his eternal Father's decrees; but merely exposing to him the inefficacious desires and conditional wishes of the inferior part of his blessed soul. And why so! Ah! It was to represent to his divine parent, the immensity of his afflictions and the exuberance of his satisfaction by comparison with the crimes he was satisfying for; and at the same time to give mankind a true sense of the much their redemption cost him.

* Hebrews v. 7.

† St. Mat. xxvii. ver. 39

‡ Ibid.

* St. Mat. xxvii. 38.

† Ibidem.

Enough, enough does it appear, with what bitterness the false sweets of our crimes have oppress'd the heart of innocent Jesus. Oh for an angel then from Heaven to administer to this divine sufferer the comfort he stands so much in need of! Oh for some celestial messenger of joy to buoy-up the fainting hero! Behold he descends:---And for the sum of all his comfort, the celestial messenger beseeches him (methinks) to remember that his death is to restore the life of grace to the World; that his blood is to purify mankind and wash away all sin from human breasts. Oh welcome comfort; if this be so! And if it be not; thy evils are indeed, my Saviour, past all remedy. Alas, too truly are the sufferings of Christ without a remedy; since the very consolation the angel comes to bring him can only serve to sharpen his anguish. For was it, think you, Christians, the sole foresight of his sufferings which render'd him thus comfortless? ah no! All the most terrifying images of his passion he had foreseen unconcern'd; could he but have foreseen them alone. But to think of suffering such exquisite tortures and suffer them in vain, was a cruel circumstance which must render the foresight of them inexpressibly more insupportable than the very pains themselves. It is a great alleviation to the severest of labours encounter'd in any undertaking, to know that those labours will be crown'd with success. "The expectation of the laurel, says *Origenes*, is a lenitive balsam which softens, sooths and almost heals-up every wound received in "battle." Point out to a true bred warrior the batter'd breach of a fortress besieged; through which he may hope, after a generous struggle, to come at the laurel of victory: And let batteries of cannon be placed at it's entrance; let the ramparts be lined with thousands of armed hands to dispute the ascent; let swords and darts and spears and guns be ready to receive him; let fire and flames and all the rude variety of warlike mischiefs fall crackling under, or fly whizzing round him; let numbers of his slain companions shew him in their fall the many deaths he has to encounter: All, all shall want strength to shake his courage; if probability but promising success excite him to the pleasing all-rewarding hope of carrying his point. How bravely shall not he dare each danger; despise the wounds, the cuts, the bruises, the red-hot slugs profoundly lodged within him; and count again, his loss of flesh and waste of blood? How firmly shall not he stand the brunt of all, himself as if himself invulnerable? Nay as if design'd for more than any impenetrable bulwark, how stoutly shall not he fight his way and force a passage through for his self and following squadrons, and hug at length the very death which reaches-out to him the glorious crown he fought for. But if the same generous hero, in the

very act of beholding the painful dangerous prospect, sees but little probability of success; oh the embitter'd discovery! Oh what disheartening damps must check each noble emotion rising in his breast! What indolence of soul must sicken thought and make even resolution stagger! Ah! What then, if, not only far from hopes of success, he have certain assurances of exhausting all his labours, spirits, blood and life to a fruitless purpose? What if some inbred prophetic presage should irresistibly convince him that all those labours, spirits blood, and life should only serve to egg his followers to their utter overthrow? Oh shock surpassing every other shock in nature! And this, this was the very plight of our half-expiring Lord at the foot of mount *Olivet*. The same divine fore-knowledge, which shew'd him his future passion, shew'd him also that that passion would be not only fruitless but ruinous to multitudes of sinners through their own perversity. Could the angel have assured him that his sufferings should sanctify the universe; (But why do I talk so largely?) Could he have consoled him with the assurances of saving one half at least of human nature; nay the few Catholics, the little flock which would adhere immoveably to his doctrines; welcome, thorns! Welcome, nails! Welcome, Cross! Welcome, ignominy! And thou, oh death, thrice welcome had'st thou been. All your terrors had been confined to your names, and wanted power to affect my Jesus with any thing but joy. But how could the angelic messenger assure him of what his divine presentiment had assured him would not be effected? And this presentiment it was which threw the divine Jesus into such an agony as bedew'd his whole sacred frame with a sanguinary sweat; and forced this Lord of majesty, whose human eyes were too confined to give his sorrows a free passage, to weep-out tears of blood through every pore.

To sow so much sacred invaluable blood, one drop of which might ransom a whole world, and yet to save so slender a part of that world and reap so spare a harvest? To die and die for ungrateful creatures, who would only make use of his death to forward their own ruin? To suffer such inexpressible torments for the love of souls and yet to be likely to redeem so very few? Oh thought too cruel! Hopes too narrow! Prospect too confined for the infinit goodnes of a generous God, who was going to sacrifice himself on a shameful cross for all mankind! I know not how, but so it is: A certain secret boding within me, figures JESUS CHRIST to my fancy on the top of Mount *Olivet*, casting his penetrating eyes triumphant over every distance of time and place, calling past ages to his presence, commanding the present to stop, and summoning the future before him. A while he pauses: ---

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But oh! the cruel pause! Beholding so many ungrateful wretches in every age and nation; so many in the unwritten law, so many in the written law, so many in the more ample law of grace, nay so many at this very season of repentance grace and mercies. Observing so many in every part of world; so many in *Europe*, so many in *England*, so many in *London*, so many (ah Heaven grant I may not have reason to say!) in this very audience, who are resolved (or at least not unresolved) in spite of his passion, blood and death to be damn'd: methinks I hear him mournfully crying out by the mouth of his prophet: * "*Have I then labour'd in vain? and in vain have I wasted my strength?*" Have I then done and suffer'd so much, and must I do and suffer so much more, all to so very little purpose? In vain have I spent the flower of all my strength and spirits? Must, after all, so many insults borne, and tortures felt, and blood pour'd forth be void of fruit? *Have I then labour'd in vain? and in vain have I wasted my strength?* O my eternal Father not to repine or murmur at thy will, do I say thus much. No: "If so thy will require; if man's redemption so demand; let every twig in this garden of *Olives* grow into a cross, and let me be successively nail'd to every one. For *not my will but thine be done*." But ah eternal father! For whom wilt thou have thy dear and only Son thus cruelly ill-treated? For infidels? Ah! How very few of them will take one step towards reaping profit from my death? Shall it then be for thy chosen people of *Israel*? But are not these most impatient implacable enemies to thee as well as me? Shall it then be for Christians? But how many of these shall continue to rack and rend the my sick body of my church with schisms, scandals, heresies and anarchy! Shall it then be at least for catholics? Ah Father eternal! how few, how very few even of these will have courage to benefit by my death and sufferings? What, tho' on a *Good-Friday* some few of them relenting shall try to heal-up my wounds with a few passing tears of compunction? How soon, how very soon, after *Easter*, will not they open them all anew with fresh offences? Ah! *Have I then labour'd in vain? and in vain have I wasted my strength?* Ah Father! If it be possible; let this *Chalice* pass from me."

And could the eternal father remain inexorable to the cries of so much grief and fear and tears and sweat and blood and agony? Could Jesus plead thus earnestly for succour and yet plead in vain? No, says St. PAUL, † *He was heard for his reverence*. And the eternal Father, to console him in his agony, propos'd to him by the ministry of his angel,

* Isaiah xlix. 4. † Heb. v. 7.

such motives as, not serving to lessen his sorrows, might at least fortify his resolution to bear them: Assuring him, that tho' his passion would be useless to many, it should be fruitful to some; that his Cross would one day be held in sovereign honour throughout the Christian world. Perhaps too was he assured that on this sacred day it would be held in special veneration in this devout assembly. And who knows but one of Jesus's grand consolations in the midst of his agony might be a presage of the extraordinary piety with which some chosen souls in this very audience shall cultivate his dying sorrows in their breast? ah let us not disappoint him then! what need has Jesus of angels to minister comfort to him which we are better qualified to give him than all the angelic choirs put together? the great comfort to be given him, amidst his agony, was that his death should be made efficacious. 'Tis the angels could not do: 'Tis you must do it, Christians. 'Tis from you, oh catholics, Christ expects this first fruit of that first effusion of his blood. Enough there are already of sinners in the world, who have render'd the agony of Christ useless by their neglects, without your adding to the number. Enough are the multitudes of the damn'd who have render'd that agony even destructive to them by their impenitent obstinacy in sin: Why should you add to the croud, and augment the griefs of Jesus by joining your condemnation to theirs? Enough, full enough, Christians, are the crimes with which we ourselves have already afflicted him. If he then graciously endured inexpressible distress to annihilate our guilt; shall we suffer that guilt to assume fresh arrogance to offend him over again?

Oh sins of human nature! oh sins of this whole audience! Oh sins of this miserable breast! in what a deluge of sorrows have you not drown'd the joy of paradise! Now, now it is I begin to discover all the foul enormity of your nature: And, if my own compunction be not sufficient to make me feel your weight; ah! Plainly do I conceive it in the affliction of my God. Oh Christian hearers, Every-One! Oh me! you have greatly sinn'd and so have I. We have all of us greatly sinn'd! And our iniquities are the instruments which have thus cruelly tortured the loving soul of lovely Jesus in this garden of *Gethsemani*. If he fainted beneath a load of sadness, made sorrowful even unto Death; for our crimes did he faint: If he wept with his sacred visage to the ground; for our crimes did he weep thus prostrate: If he, to weep forth tears of sweat and blood, open'd an Eye in every vein; for our crimes did he open it. Yes, says the prophet ISAIAH: * *He was wounded for our iniquities, for our crimes was he broken*. Shall we then remember all this, unmoved for him and for our-

* Chap. liii. v.

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selves? Shall we have assembled here to contemplate his passion, only to render it useless to us afterwards? No: Forbid it, gracious Heaven! No; I say: Ere we quit this garden, ere we conclude the contemplation of this mystery; let us generously resolve to co-operate with the blood of JESUS: To the end that, tho' this precious liquor should be shed in vain on all the world beside, it may at least yield benefit to us. Let us then for this end, join to the victim of his love the sacrifice of our contrition, in such an inbred grief for our sins as may at once console and imitate the sorrow of his breast.

No more does this divine martyr ask of his eternal Father the removal of his Chalice. No, my beloved fellow-Christians: 'Tis to you he now says, *Let this Chalice pass from me.* Let it pass from my breast to yours. Let the sorrow which oppresses'd my innocent bosom now afflict your guilty one. Yes, brethren, let it pass into the inmost part of your souls, to rack you with inward grateful generous grief that ever you committed those sins for which he shed so much blood and Tears. Yes, my Saviour, yes: Let the Chalice of thy sorrows pass from thee to us. Be comforted if our contrition can console thee. Accept, dear Lord, the sacrifice of our humble contrite hearts. Oh how it stings us to the quick, for thy loved sake alone, that ever we committed sins which cost thee so much sweat and tears and blood! And ah! No more will we henceforth consent to offend thee with one mortal sin; tho' it were to purchase the whole world, or free us from a thousands deaths. Vile enough have we already been to force through thy sacred veins that bloody sweat; without joining thy executioners in insulting thee farther. Christians! Let your hearts repeat what my mouth has utter'd. And that you may have leisure to renew these sentiments, ere I take JESUS out of his own hands to put him into the hands of his enemies, I shall trust him awhile in yours. See then you treat him well, speak to him the affections of your souls; while I try to regain that breath, which over-bearing tenderness has almost taken from me. Tell him, how much you love him. Tell him, how grieved you are for having offended him: Tell him with a heart full of candor; a bosom full of fervor; and eyes full of tears. Yes: give every tender loose to tears. For, if this be not a time for weeping; when—ah! When shall there be a time?

CHRISTIANS! Enjoy your pious grief: While you have time even weep your fill for agonizing JESUS. 'Tis lawful; 'tis commendable; nay a duty to indulge each sad affection of the soul in sight of such distress, of such a sufferer. If he grudged not to endure it all for us, why or how shall we deem it too much to cherish a mournful

memory of it! But? ah what strange what sudden tumult hastens-on to interrupt our melancholy feast of sorrow? Alas! there is no time to enjoy a leisurely grief where every present horror is so closely follow'd by a greater. O my dear sympathising brethren! If so severe appear'd to you the tragic scene your pious contemplation shew'd you in this garden; ah how much ruder must appear, the next which opens to us! If love treated JESUS with such roughness, what shall the rage of hatred do? hitherto we have consider'd this divine personage in his own hands: And how bloody have they not made him all over? Ah! what Blood then shall be left in him to shed, now that he is going (as it was) out of himself to be put into the hands of his enemies, into the hands of his butchers? Hitherto his pangs began in his soul and vented themselves dispersing through his body: Now shall they overspread his whole sacred frame; and thence, recoiling by a kind of tyrant *Antiperistasis*, intrude back to his very soul their united violence, drowsy disciples of sorrowing JESUS! You who have slept over the recital of his agony! Ah! venture not to awake to the growing labours of his passion! Even *sleep ye now your fill and take your rest.* * What have unrepenting sinners to do with care or compassion for JESUS now, when *behold the hour approacheth, and the son of man shall be betray'd into the hands of sinners?* † But no: Surely no one of you, my dear-loved auditors, can be so cruel-hearted as not to have pitied your agonizing Lord. *Arise then, let us go: Behold he approacheth who shall betray him.* ‡ Oh what confusion are my spirits hurried into, while attentive to this passage; wherein nothing was to be seen but rabble and riots and spears and clubs and lanthorns and torches: Nothing to be heard but clattering of clubs, clashing of arms, and mixtures of shouts and cries? O what a number of sacrilegious hands employ'd against this divine innocent, which gratitude should have employ'd in his service! Ah! is it just that, while his omnipotent arm is uplifted to the succour of all, the arms of all should be thus raised to his oppression? But meet it was that the prophecy should be fulfill'd in this divine *Ismael: § His bands against all, and the hands of all against him.*

1. Who but for melancholy experience, could have conceived it possible that the Saviour of the world, come on purpose to redeem it, should find enemies in the world? And yet alas did he find them. Yes, he found soldiers to apprehend him, judges to condemn him and butchers to slay him with scourges: Who would have thought it? But what is worse he found a friend to betray him and no one to stand by him: Who could have believed it? But did not

* St. Mat. xxvi. 45. † *Ibidem.*

‡ Ver. 46. § Genes. xvi. 12.

*Peter stand-up in his defence? Was not he one of them who were with Jesus, and who stretching forth his hand drew out his sword, and striking the servant of the high Priest cut off his ear? * Yes, fervent, but fickle disciple thou was't. But thy heavenly master wanted not such defence. He came not to conquer by fury but by meekness: Put-up again thy sword then into it's place: For all who take the sword shall perish by the sword. † What did all thy zeal without discretion avail, but to put thy milder Lord to the expence of a miracle to cure the wound thou made'st? Why all this misplaced fury against Malcus, a part of which were well employed against thyself; whose own inconstancy shall quickly cost poor Jesus more affliction than all the insolence of his apprehenders? In spite of thy past protestations to stand by him, in spite of all thy present fervor to defend him, even in this night before the Cock shall crow, thou wilt deny him thrice.‡ Learn hence, oh Christians, to fear and tremble. Let not the faults of others warm your Seal with indiscretion, to expose; or fury, to oppress them: But rather awake your vigilance to watch over yourselves: Trust not to present fits of fervor: But dreading, lest too profound a self-security should prove your greatest danger, let each among you, who thinks he stands, use still the greater caution that he do not fall. §*

Our divine Lord then wanted not the arms of the flesh to rescue him from suffering in the flesh? No: He had at his beckon *Legions of Angels*; || Yet even these did he not need nor make use of. The sole majesty of his countenance had sufficed for his guard, had he so pleased: And even the sole meekness of his aspect, as the fact made appear. No sooner did he perceive the ribald troop, who arm'd with fury were breathing nought but his destruction, than he (as if they had been a band of friends) with all the awful majesty of meekness, hasting on to meet them, mildly ask'd: * *Whom seek ye?* And, they answering *Jesus of Nazareth*, strait with an assuring calmness he replied: † *I, even I am he.* Twice he repeats the endearing words; and twice fall the ribalds prostrate at his sacred feet, their faces to the ground, their souls and senses with their fears almost buried under it. Oh almighty power of heavenly meekness! Oh terror-striking sounds of humble Jesus! *I am he?* O think, my soul, and quake before-hand! If these mild accents utter'd by the humble son of man, with such a gentle tone, had power thus to terrify a harden'd band of desperate ruffians; ah! what terrors shall not force each guilty Soul to quake when this same Son of God as well as man, no

more a tender Saviour but a rigorous judge, with stern severity of looks shall say: "Sinner! 'tis I: "Yes, *I am he*, whom thou has't rashly dared so grievously, so often, and so obstinately to insult?" What! Jesus but saying, *I am he* strait fells the formidable squadron to the ground? He then alone, who laid them prostrate, can enable them to rise: And only He, who stripp'd them of their liberty, could give them power over his own. If then they needed his licence to lay hands upon him, they were not long held in suspense without it. No: *Love*, beneficent *Love* had already bound his generous heart, and this secret captivity of heart made him renounce and give up all his privileges. Jesus therefore, in concert with *Love*, resolved to work no more miracles for his safety, voluntarily gave himself up into the hands of his persecutors. Still----who, Christians, do you imagin, might be the first dread-defying wretch, who ventured to lay violent hands upon the Lord of liberty? Was it, think you, some infidel, some atheist, some canibal, some monster-compound of tyger and Barbarian? Such had been proper instruments for a deed so black. But no: The unnatural act was too atrocious for their softer, less ungrateful nature. To aggravate the dire affront, the execution of such baseness must be reserved for an apostle.

Oh *Judas! Judas!* Was't thou then the basest felon whom the *Jews* could pitch upon, to head the dauntless rabble sent to seize on Jesus? Perfidious wretch! basest of traitors! that Jesus chose thee to spread his name from pole to pole: And art thou come to bind his sacred person with a false embrace, and betray him thus into the hands of barbarity? Was this the best return thou had'st to make him for making thee of the number of his chosen twelve, for bringing thee to the dignity of priesthood, for feeding thee with his precious body and blood; to betray him with a murderous kiss? To make use of his friendship for thee, to perpetrate thy enmity against him? To pervert the surest pledge of peace and safety into a signal of war and ruin? *Whomever I shall kiss, that is he: bold him?* * Oh wretch of wretches! oh *Antonomasia* of all traitors! oh-----But! Since that all-forgiving Lord whom thou betrayest, gives thee the kiss of peace; I will not declare against thee war. Since he vouchsafes to call thee friend, I will not call thee one opprobrious name. Say then, *friend* (since Jesus calls thee so) *to what art thou come?* † Is it to adore *ad extra*, that loving Lord, whose precious body, blood and soul, and godhead are still enshrined within thy breast? Or, is it to make an honourable reparation for the injury thou has't done him, in selling his unpurchaseable Majesty for thir-

* St. Mat. xxvi. 51.

† Ibid. 52.

‡ Ibid. 34.

§ 1 Cor. x. 12.

|| 53.

* St. John xviii. 4.

† Ibid. 5.

* St. Mat. xxvi. 48.

† Ibid. 50.

ty pieces of perishable dross? Ah no! The rage, with which thy impious tribe *draw near, lay hands on Jesus, and hold him.** In captivity, sufficiently betrays the unrelenting perfidy with which thou art come, to add to thy secret treachery, the public insult of seizing him with as many hands as thou hast brought along with thee. Go then, unhappy creature! Go! How little does thy ill-judged avarice avail thee! Giving-up thy Lord, thou hast given-up every treasure. Not even thy sordid bribe shall aught avail thee. No: Puke-forth the price of this flagitious deed, and let it buy a *burying place for strangers.*† Whatever thy perverted views might be, Jesus consented not to being sold, for the encouragement of covetise; but that his blood might be a pledge of hospitality, an asylum even to strangers, even in death. Go then; repent thee of thy folly; and, for want of a viler tongue to accuse thee, become thy own accuser. Say then, for thou may'st say with truth: *I have sinned, betraying just blood.*‡ *Judas!* Thou hast said it: But oh misplaced repentance! Oh misguided penitent! Why own thus much to thy accomplices? Or, why not say as much to thy forgiving Master? ah had'st thou but join'd to that *Hail Rabbi,* § with which thou did'st betray him, one deep relenting sigh, and said, after DAVID, || *To thee alone have I sinn'd, and done evil before thee!* How happily had'st thou repair'd all the former wrongs thou had'st done him! How had'st thou not afforded him room to pardon thee, room to be justified in restoring thee to his grace and room to overcome, when rashly judged for so doing!* But ah, thy repentance is a repentance of despair, not a repentance of love, and therefore void of fruit. In vain do'st thou think, along with the wages of thy iniquity, to throw the guilt of it on thy accomplices. The perfidy is all thy own. Thou hast sinn'd, and *what is that to them?* Do thou look to it: † Go then once more, unrelenting *Judas!* Go, most hapless of wretches! Receive the true wages of thy perversity, and for want of a viler executioner become thy own. I make no doubt, Christians, but that you are all, by this time, exasperated against the treachery of this false disciple. But ah! why then do you practise it yourselves? Oh, what treacheries against Jesus does not avarice, lust, revenge, ambition daily work in the breast of Christians! Does not everyone daily sell him for some paltry, fleeting, false, unprofitable gain. How often do many of you say,

* Mat. xxvi. 50. † *Ibid.* xxvii. 7.

‡ St. Mat. xxvii. 4. § *Ibid.* xxvi. 49. || *Psalms* l. 6.

¶ For the farther explanation of this Reflection, see the Paraphrase to the *Seven Penitential Psalms*, upon this verse: Publish'd by the same Author.

† S. Mat. xxvii. 4.

in your hearts, to Jesus's enemies, to Satan and his ministers, along with Judas: * "*What will you give me, and I will deliver him to you?*" Oh, could I, at any rate, but get this sum of money, that other toy! Oh, could I but assure that beauty to my will! Might I but ruin, or oppress that adversary! Oh, for this post! that title! the smiles and favour of such a prince, or such a man in power!"---But Jesus must be injured to compass this desire. "No, matter. *What will you give me, and I will deliver him to you?*" Ah, Christians! Let us, learn from the fall of Judas, into what extremities a favorite appetite indulged may plunge a man, when it can urge him to sell his God. Let us learn from his ruin, that there is no price to be set upon God; and, that he never ought to be made the tool of our inordinate desires, or worldly interests. Or, if we have already been so wretched as to barter him for earthly considerations; ah! let us ransom him with our tears; let us rescue him with the returns of our penitent love. Why shall we load Jesus with a repetition of our crimes, when these have already overwhelm'd him with chains?

Sacred chains of my Redeemer, which, with this first moment of his captivity, closed-up the last period of his civil life! Through you it was, he first began to be no more his own master, deliver'd into the hands of the powers of darkness, who robb'd him, unjustly, of two sorts of liberty common to all men; his natural liberty and his civil freedom. The former (beloved) was taken from him by ignoble cords, and the latter by that insulting arrest which put him into the hands of public justice; or rather let me say, of unjust tyranny. In short, he began his passion by his chains; and we ought to adore those very chains, although the chains of Jesus, since he submitted to them, only to break asunder our chains, those appetites which hold us captives here to sin, and shall hereafter confine us to eternal flames; if we make not a right use of his confinement to shake them off. Sacred garden of *Olives* where this capture was made! Sacred torrent of *Cedron*, made precious with his dropping blood! I bid you now adieu. Already do they hurry my Jesus along: Already have the Twelve forsaken him: Methinks I see the trophy of his beloved JOHN's timidity (the *linen garment* † which he forsook to flee the lighter) borne in insulting triumph amidst the populace. Jesus is left alone to all the wanton insults of a tumultuous mob. After him then, Christians, let our imagination haste: After him let me lead your pitying hearts. Yet, ah! expect not, I should lead you forward with any sort of order. What possibility is there of keeping order, where all is wild disorder and confusion?

* St. Mat. xxvi. 25. † St. Mark xiv. 51, 52.

fusion? How is it possible to give you a regular description of the fury, with which they assail him, on every side, in this painful, opprobrious passage from the garden to the city; when, after one soldier's having seized his person, all the barbarous troop pour'd-in upon him, with such impetuosity, that, like a pack of mastifs, you would have thought they mean'd nothing less than to tear him immediately limb from limb? How shall I point-out to you, in such a riot, which ruffians beat him to the ground, how many trampled on him, or who loaded him with spittle, dirt and cords and bruises; where all were jointly busied in buffeting him forward or dragging him along? All then which I shall aim at doing, is, to follow my injured Saviour, by the track of his blood, and halt awhile at the places where he suffered most (if most there can be where all was to excess) and reverently gather-up the melancholy relics of distress, which he shall leave behind untrodden, uneffaced by the rabble crew which thus surround him.

I am not talking to you, Christians, of a common thief, abandon'd to the mercy of the populace; nor yet of some fierce tyger thrown amongst dogs to worry. No: I am talking to you of the gentle Lamb of God, your Lord and mine plunged, by our crimes, into a worse condition. Ah! where then is your compassion? Behold how this innocent Lamb, by the violence of sacrilegious hands is hurried along, through the melancholy streets of *Jerusalem*, all cover'd with dirt and indignities! The first tribunal he is haled to is that of *Annas* * the father-in-law of the then reigning high-priest, who, grown old in iniquities as in years, with no just room to detain him, yet wants the justice to acquit him. He questions our Lord about his doctrine, and our Lord appeals for the justification of it to the people. Could there be a greater mark at once of meekness and innocence? Yet needed there no more to make one of this iniquitous judge's servants smite Christ, with a vehement stroke upon his divine cheek, in complaisance to his master, † Oh, how many souls are led away from the service of God by servile complaisance for creatures! Oh, what a tyrant world, where masters are best to be pleased at the expence of God's honour, at the cost of a dependent's salvation! Oh folly! Oh malice of worldly respect: Cause of the first remarkable injury which Jesus received in his passion! First, indeed, but neither the last nor the least; if we consider four circumstances attending it: The person who gave the blow; the manner of giving it; the place where it was given, and the dignity of the personage it was level'd at. The striker was a soldier, a menial servant too, and the servant of a priest, of a judge, of one, who, in

* *St. John* xviii. 13. † *Ibid.* 22.

both capacities, should have been an advocate for the criminal, and much more a protector of the crimeless. The manner was insolent, was daring, was oppressive and painful; it was given with all the vigour of cruelty; and tended at once to stop the mouth of the accused from a just defence, and to give assurance to his accusers to aggravate a charge they might swell with impunity. The place was a public tribunal, where the greatest of felons are indulged with immunity and safety; and, therefore the greater the grievance for the innocent to be there insulted. Ah, what then must it be for the Son of God to receive so gross an affront from so vile a hand, with so much pain and excess, as to bear the external marks of it imprinted on his blessed cheek, and that in the presence of a judge, in the eyes of the public! Tell me, men and angels, were you ever witnesses to so grievous an affront as this which my Jesus here received? Were you ever spectators of so astonishing a patience? What threats did he return? What reproaches did he make. What anger did he express at so foul an affront? Ah! all the notice he took of it was, with an amorous tone, and modest rebuke to answer: * *If I have spoken ill, give testimony of the evil: But if well; why strikest thou me?* Come, human sufferers! Come, you who are honour'd with sharing a simple taste of Jesus passion? Come, you who think you endure your little ills with constancy! Come and compare your patience with that of Jesus, and you will find, that, if your sufferings are indeed but little in proportion, your patience still is less.

Virtue, even in distress, never fails to strike an insupportable awe into vice amid'st all it's gayest splendor: *Annas* therefore, unable any longer to stand the irresistible lustre of Jesus's innocence: transmits him, bound, to *Caiphas*; † where all his ill-treatment was redoubled. So true is it, that men, generally speaking, improve in vices as they advance in dignities. *Caiphas* was reigning high-priest for the then year: And he it was who had declared it expedient that one man die for the people. ‡ What justice then had Jesus to expect from a judge, who had previously determin'd his death? Or, what wonder was it, that Jesus, declaring himself to be what he was, the Son of God; the miscreant should, to accomplish his purpose, affect to rend his garment § with zeal for God's honour? It being no new thing for hypocrites to make the greater external shew of religion and piety the less of it they have in their hearts. In fact this impious high-priest, who could shew so much pomp of zeal for the the name of God, was not ashamed to deliver-up (in open violation of all

* *St. John* xviii. 22. † *St. John* xviii. 24.

‡ *Ibid.* 14. § *St. Mat.* xxvi. 65.

the rules of legislative justice) the Son of GOD, to be abused and outrageously insulted by his own domestics; who had the insolence, some of them, to spit in his divine face, and to buffet him, while others, blind-folding him, smote his blessed visage with the palms of their hands, saying: Prophecy to us, Christ, who is he who struck thee? * So true is it, generally speaking, that the best sample of a master's insolence is the arrogance of his domestics. And so few are the exceptions from that common rule, that the servants of great men are better distinguish'd, by the vices and outrages they practise after them, than by the liveries they wear under them.

But what were all these outrages, affronts and taunts from Caipbas's servants, in comparison of the more grating injuries which JESUS, at the same received from his own? Oh Peter; Was it not enough that the Jews should suborn false evidence to accuse thy Lord; but thou, without a bribe, must add thy voluntary perjuries to testify against him? Those witnesses, who sold their evidence, were perjured only in their being venal: They swore to miracles Christ spoke and wrought: Yet, what they swore was true. But Peter, more perjured than them all, preventing every bribe, began to curse and swear that he knew not the man. † Ah faint-hearted disciple! why all this fear and shame? Was this of a piece with thy former forwardness to die rather than forsake thy Master? Or, was this Master so changed in manners, that it was become scandalous to have him even for an acquaintance? Or, finally, was his countenance so changed as that thou really could'st not know him? Ah no! What tho', as his prophet ‡ had foretold, his former beauty nor comeliness were any more to be seen; what though, become despised and most abject of men, his look was, as it were, bidden and condemn'd; what though, bearing our infirmities, he appeared, as it were, a leper, and stricken by God and humbled; yet was he not alter'd in his dress: Yet did his seamless garment § discover him to thee. Yet did his unvaried sanctity of manners manifest him to be that same JESUS, whom thou had'st promised, at the peril of thy life, rather to die than desert; though all the world besides should forsake him. || Ah! own then, Peter, that thy triple denial was the triple effect of thy inconsistency: Own that JESUS knew thee better than thou knewest thyself; when, to check thy presumptuous confidence, he so plainly foretold thee: * before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice. Hear how the faithful bird, with it's reproaching note bids thee to bewail thy faithless fickleness. Yes: Peter hear'd: And going-forth wept bitterly.†

* St. Mat. xxvi. 68. † Ver. 67, 74. ‡ Isaiah liii. 2, 3, 4. § St. John xix. 23. || St. Mat. xxvi. 33. * Ibid. 34, 75. † St. Mat. xxvi. 73.

But why this going-forth? Must JESUS feel the bitter sting at heart of this his primary apostle's faithless fall? and yet not have the consolation to see him rise again? Yes: So he himself disposed. Already had he given-up all comforts upon earth, and this among the rest. Peter too was still in the occasion of his sin, while he continued in the fatal court; and therefore must go-forth to weep. For no repentance can be true, no tears sincere or fruitful, which do not first set-out with an effectual removal of the occasion: And he, who loves danger, shall perish in it. * Or, rather let me say with equal truth: Peter was penitent; but Peter still was weak, and wanted fortitude of mind publicly to repair the public scandal he had brought upon his Lord, by publicly disowning him. O wretched, wretched weakness of human heart! How ready, how bold, with Peter, to sin in public! How fearful, how ashamed with Peter to weep in public the scandal given! Ah, 'tis too general a case with Christians! How many of them glory in the public scandal they bring upon the name and faith of Christ, by their unchristian manners! How very rarely do we see the true relenting convert, who blushes not to give GOD glory in as open a reparation of his honour? Hence, the source, perhaps, of so many and such repeated relapses. All are for repenting in private with Peter: None for the public repentance of a Publican or Magdalen. And, therefore, perhaps, is it that we rarely see repentances so sincere, so fervent, or so lasting as theirs were.

Well, Saviour of the world! If thou art to meet with no more justice at this judge's bar, than thou has't hitherto found; it is time to move hence. Yes, the cause of the poor may easily change tribunal; but seldom meets with ought but oppression at any. From Caipbas then JESUS is transmitted to Pilate, † and from Pilate to Herod, ‡ who, disappointed of the ostentation of miracles he expected to find in the divine criminal, construes his reserve and silence into folly. For, in the courts of earthly princes to lie; to deceive; to circumvent with the tongue; to rise, by imposition, on the ruin of a companion; to advance by flattery, in the favour of the prince, or the patron, is the wisdom in vogue. But to love truth, to be inoffensive, to keep a prudent reserve on the mouth is downright folly. And, therefore, is JESUS sent back again by Herod to Pilate dressed in a white garment, the type, in those times, of a fool or an idiot. § Poor JESUS! where are thy sorrows to end, which are here but commencing? Alas, with the change of thy dress thou art not to change usage, or art to change it for worse. What, though the candor

* Eccles. iii. 27. † St. Luke xxiii. 1. ‡ Ibid. 7. § Ibid. 11.

of thy garment be an emblem of thy innocence? What can innocence avail at a court, but to draw upon thee the more cruel oppression? *Pilate* has a court: *Pilate* too is a politician. And ah! how rarely do politicians ever form a scheme which is not the oppression of some innocent? Nay, which is not, in some sense, a condemnation of God? Nevertheless, our politic president would fain set Christ at liberty; not so much from any zeal of righting the injured and ministering justice to the oppressed as because he is puzzled, so extremely puzzled to find, even a plausible plea to condemn him, that he is forced in public to avow his perplexity: *I find no cause in this Man.* * No, truly: No cause either of condemnation or trial: On the reverse, *he knew that the chief priests for envy had deliver'd him.* † Why then, oh *Pilate*, do'st thou not set JESUS at liberty? Yes, *Pilate* would gladly do so; could he make it agree with his worldly pursuits; could he do it without risk of being misrepresented to *Cæsar*, and losing his interest with him. Oh, how many political *Pilates* don't we daily see, who would gladly set JESUS at liberty in the release of an insolvent debtor, in the just recompense of the hired labourer, in the forgiveness of a persecuted enemy; did it but suit with their passions, pleasures and Interests! But when was there ever any good understanding between the maxims of Christ and the maxims of the world? Never, no, never: Nor can there ever be. There is no serving *two masters* at once. There is no reconciling the interests of Heaven with those of the earth; nor those of Christ with those of *Pilate*. If you will be friends with Christ; you will soon be declared *no friends* to *Cæsar*. ‡ *Pilate* however resolves on a trial of his skill; and, to save that life which JESUS so despised, robs him of (what is dearer to him than life) his honour and dignity, by putting him in comparison with an infamous felon.

At the same time of year, it was customary for the president to gratify the people with the liberty of freeing some criminal adjudged guilty of death; and an old offender, *Barabbas* by name, notorious for the number as well as blackness of his crimes, was actually in prison. This then does *Pilate* pitch upon to couple with JESUS: Imagining that the deformity of the comparison might render the divine criminal less odious to the people. But ah, how vain is their attempt, who think, by doing evil, to effect some good! No, no: Where malice, craft and servile views once seize the heart; there is seldom any difference made between virtue and vice, between innocence and guilt; unless it be to give the latter the preference. *Whom will you then, cries the time-serving judge, that I release to you;*

* *Ibid.* 4. St. John xix. 4. † St. Mat. xxvii. 18. ‡ St. John xix. 12.

Barabbas, or JESUS who is called CHRIST? * And where was the wonder to hear the deceived multitude cry-out: "Not him, whom you have named last, but *Barabbas*?" † Where was the wonder, I say, when, after having been practised upon by the priests, and the leaders of their party, they find *Barabbas* to be the first on the president's list? *Whom will you that I release to you Barabbas or JESUS?* Trivial then as this seeming oversight may appear in itself, the consequences shew how criminal such mistakes are, in those, who, presiding, ought to use every caution not to misguide the judgment of those they preside over. For, from such errors, too often maliciously premeditated in elections, whether politic or religious, it often follows, that the worthless are prefer'd and the worthy set aside; it often follows, that ignorance, impudence, folly, vice and factious ambition are advanced, to crush knowledge, modesty, sense, and guileless merit. Oh Christian Electors! How often are your votes, even in religious affairs, misguided by the like party-rage, passion, malice, and baser motives which actuated this fordid populace? JESUS was innocent, and in that, unlike the *Jews*: No wonder then, that, with such previous biases, they should postpone him to *Barabbas*, who was a thief, a traitor, a sower of public discord, a header of sedition, in short, a factious, flagitious knave, a murderer of his brethren's lives and characters, ‡ and, therefore, the more like themselves. Oh, shocking choice! Oh election of all injuries the most injurious to JESUS. And yet how often is not it imitated, nay improved upon, by Christians, who, not content with preferring the will of this powerful man, of that beautiful, wanton woman, of this other sinner, to that of JESUS, prefer their very passions and crimes to the person itself of JESUS. "Not him but *Barabbas*," they cry; whenever he is set in competition with a favorite sin. What have I to do "with my sacramented God; now this post has offer'd, now that beauty invites." Ah, *Barabbas*, *Barabbas* is the word: Christians! Not Christ but *Barabbas*.

This scheme then defeated, to what stratagem shall *Pilate* have recourse, to save JESUS? Why—My blood creeps chilling along my veins, and my very soul shudders but to relate it! Grown cruel in compassion, to rescue his guiltless prisoner from one death, he puts him to the torture of a thousand. In short, he takes him, and has him inhumanly scourged. *Pilate*, says the Evangelist, took JESUS, and scourged him. § Ah, how many, like *Pilate*, scourge JESUS with the barbarous piety of their ser-

* St. Mat. xxvii. 17. † St. John xviii. 40. ‡ St. Mat. xxvii. 10. St. Mark xv. 7. St. Luke xxiii. 19, 25. St. John xviii. 40. § St. John xix. 1.

vil complaisances, in numberless venial sins; who soon as er, like *Pilate*, are thence drawn-in to give him to crucifixion with mortal ones! Oh Christians! Believe me, there is no making honourable or safe terms with sin. The fortress, which once parleys deliberately with that tyrant, will sooner or later be reduced to surrender at discretion. But! What said I? Or, what do I hear? *Pilate took Jesus and scourged him*. What unheard-of baseness was this of the president, to break-out into such unprovoked fury against the sacred person of Christ; and, after acting the part of a corrupted ruler, to become a relentless butcher? *Pilate took Jesus and scourged him*? Oh grandees! rulers! parents! masters, guardians, and heads of civil or domestic government! How don't I tremble more for you than even for *Pilate*! *Pilate took Jesus and scourged him*? Let me see! *Pilate*, during the flagellation of Christ, remain'd all the while quiet within his palace; too distant from his sacred person to be able to hurt him with a finger. What then? Still were those ruffians scourging our Saviour with the arm of *Pilate*: Or, rather let me say, *Pilate* was all the while scourging JESUS CHRIST with the weapons and hands of every-one of them. Every crime, committed by the direction, or connivance, of the head, is the crime of the head. Not only subjects, but even the sins of subjects, too often pay tribute to their superiors: And, as these, generally speaking, lay claim to the chief disposal of their persons and wills; so too have they commonly the largest share in their guilt. You, Oh gentry, think you do not scourge Christ, because taken-up with your devotions, you generally prefer your oratory to a ridotto, your prayers to a play. But who knows, that your domestics, your dependents, are not scourging JESUS CHRIST with their irregularities, which you take so little thought to look into, and so little pains to reform. You, oh masters of families, think, you never scourge him, because you are not only diligent at the public service of mornings and evenings, on days of obligation, but for ever on your knees at prayer, or on your feet, in an ill-timed search of erroneous sinners to convert them: But who knows that your starving wife and children are not scourging him with their murmurings for want of that bread, which your industry, in your station, should earn them? Who knows that your family will not, one-day, first scourge and then crucify him through the gross ignorance and wants of education, and common necessities, to which your lazy zeal exposes them; by your renouncing your real vocations to the edifying others, by a pious industry in your own profession, and loitering away your time in a shameful usurpation of the office, not your own, of preaching and disputing? You, oh mothers and

mistresses of families, you too foolishly flatter yourselves, that you never scourge Christ, because, forsooth, with a book of piety in hand, you are forever screening yourselves, in some chapel or closet, from those cares which make up one essential part of your duty. But how often are your children scourging Christ in your absence with sins which your mistaken tenderness rather indulges them in, than corrects them for? How frequently do the disorderly riots of your domestics heap scourges on Christ by the favour of your indolent piety? How often do you provoke your husbands to scourge JESUS CHRIST with their anger, their oaths, and their imprecations, while you, leaving your houses in every disorder (to go hear a sermon you are unfit to profit by; to go seek an indulgence you are unworthy to gain;) are losing yourselves in the corner of a church, at the foot of some altar? You, oh servants, imagin you never scourge your Lord, if you can steal away from your work to hide yourselves in a church, or place of piety. What, though I'll suppose you never make it a pharisaic pretext to pay your loitering visits, or sinful rendezvous; What though I'll suppose you spend all the time you are absent, in hearing more public prayers than one, in hearing sermons, or running after God's ministers; Know you not that your time is not your own? Know you not that, once your superiors do their duty in allowing you the necessary leisure to do your public devotions to God, and receive the requisit instructions, all the time you waste besides, without their consent, is a real robbery? Know you not, that all the rest of your time should be employed in your private devotions, and that your private devotions should consist in the sanctifying the menial works they require at your hands, and pay you for? And, if your abusing their indulgence in that particular, should provoke them to wrath, to oaths and indecent passions; if it should induce them to straiten those necessary liberties, with others after you, who might make a better use of them; if it should incense them into that impious way of thinking,---of preferring the service of those who are strangers to God, to the household of faith, they, indeed, will scourge Christ, and that severely too. But you, who are the original causes, will be the severest scourgers. Yes, yes, oh dearest part of Christ's flock! You, oh serving Christians! believe me, not out of contempt, but out of the first-born tenderness I have for you, I must tell you, that, if you indulge such practices, you are losing your time, and losing yourselves. For 'tis not devotion, but the prostitution of it: 'Tis not assisting at prayers, but skulking from work: 'Tis not going to sermons, but gadding under pretext of them: 'Tis not seeking priests for instruction, but running after them from a spirit of gossipry;

gossipry: Finally, if it be not a direct flagellation of Christ with your own hands; it is obliquely scourging him with the hands of others. Oh how many Christians, in every station of life, foolishly deceiving themselves wash their hands with *Pilate* and say after him, * *I am innocent of the blood of this just man*: Whereas Christ all the while owes to none more than to them the cruel butchery of his flagellation!

But, ah Christians! let us leave that unnatural office to his barbarous executioners. If Christ must be thus ill-treated, let him not be ill-used by us his friends: Leave that to his profest enemies. Too effectually, in fact, have they done it: And, oh how cruelly! One thing however we have to console us: That those monsters could not be more eager to torment Christ than he was to suffer. He himself advances cheerful to the fatal pillar: He himself strips off his garment: He himself stretches forth his lovely arms to the ignoble cords prepared to tie him: He himself, emboldening the heartless tyrants to begin their office in the words of the royal Psalmist, † *I am prepared for scourges*; steps-in between the anger of his eternal Father, and mankind, against whom his scourge was lifted-up upon the point to strike. Thus, often shall you see a tender mother step-in between her guilty son and angry husband, to ward the blows the parent levels at the child, and make her body a shield to defend him. But now the ruffians begin to shower down the merciless strokes: Now, from his precious frame, not drops but streams of blood gush forth at every turn of scourge. Think, Christians, think you hear the sounding stripes upon his sacred flesh, stripe upon stripe, too quick to count, like the repeated peals of rattling thunder. What shouts the rabble make at every bolder stroke! Their hatred enhanced by their cruelty, chose for the bloody purpose, a specious court closely crowded with soldiers, who (divided into bands, to relieve one-another, and take their turns in the barbarous sport) tired their arms before they tired their cruelty in tormenting him. No measure was used in the number of lashes, no rule in the choice of the weapons, no exceptions made against switches, knotted cords, or rods of briar and thorn. In short, to such inhuman excess did their fury extend, that, at length, for want of room to open fresh sores, "they tortured, to excess, not his limbs but his wounds," as St. Cyprian beautifully expresses it: And what the holy Job, † said allegorically of his own body, Jesus might literally say of his; *They have pour'd-forth my bowels upon the earth: They have cut me with wound upon wound*. So that we are not so much to consider his blessed frame as mangled and disfi-

* St. Mat. xxvii. 24. † Psalm xxxvii. 18.

† Chap. xv. 15, 16.

gured with wounds; but rather as one continued wound. But, what shall I add to describe him to you, in this barbarous passage, after what I have said? unless it be that, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, he had not a whole place in his flesh.

But stay your rage, ye, what shall I call you?—Men? No: Savages! tygers! monsters! suspend a-while your barbarous fury; and let us see, if any pity may be shewn to Jesus. Methinks my wives have recall'd that cruel period to my view; and I stand pleading for my Saviour to his parent's mercy. Father eternal! Who is it, whom now I contemplate thus ill-treated? Is it not thy dear, thy innocent, and only-begotten Son? Yes, (methinks the "heavenly Father answers) my Son he is. But "then he is thy victim, thy sin-offering, loaded "and overwhelm'd with thy enormities. Strike "therefore, executioners: Strike-on as bold as ever." But oh, eternal God of mercies! Has he not bled enough as yet for evils not his own? Were it not time to put an end to so much savage cruelty. "Ah yes! It would, it might, it should "be time to end it; would men once think it time "to put an end to sinning." Oh God of my heart! Is there no more required then to rescue Jesus from his anguish? Ah, stay the barbarous butcher-hands! Let them no more lift up their sacrilegious arms to strike that bleeding innocent! Command them to unloose the horrid knot which keeps him bound, and set my Jesus free. Behold both me, and all this contrite audience, join'd in sentiment, grieved from our souls that ever we have scourged him with our crimes, or those of others: And for the love of thee, and him, and thy eternal love, resolved we are, through your all-powerful grace, rather to die the sharpest death than ever scourge him more. Oh, my dear auditors! Were we but steadily resolved on this; how happy might not we be! How might not we heal-up all the sores of Jesus! And how would not every sore he felt rejoice him still! But, alas! And with what shame and terror am not I seized when I think of it! This is a resolution taken every year on this holy day, and a resolution every year broken within a few days after. And ah, to our confusion I see, and am forced to own, that Christianity, enter'd in upon the rage of Gentilism, and the fury of the Synagogue, with improvements of perfidy, still continues to scourge JESUS CHRIST. The thought is St. Augustin's: Take it, therefore, in his own words. "Ah! With daily crimes, says the Saint, we "scourge our Lord over again." 'Tis not, however, that Jesus is any longer exposed to feel the weight of our scourges. No: He is now impassible; and, in himself, can no more suffer; But then for that no thanks are due to us. As often as we

repeat

repeat those crimes for which he once endured the scourge, still do we so often scourge him over-again, as much as in us lies. Thus I, unworthiest of his ministers, how often have not I scourged him! How often do not I still continue to scourge him, with the scandals I have given, and (still tho' undesignedly) may give! How often don't we all, more or less scourge him, with our irreverences at the altar to his precious body and blood; with our omissions towards his mystic body, the flock committed to our charge; and with our little breaches of charity one towards another! You, oh nobility! How frequently don't you scourge JESUS CHRIST, with the heaven-defying pride of your arrogant, over-bearing, all-crushing thoughts? With the dissolute extravagancies which urge so many of you to the oppression of your tenants; to the ruin of your creditors; to the exasperation of your domestics and dependants; to the contempt, or at least neglect, of those poor, over whom Providence appointed you not tyrants but stewards? And finally, with the luxury and other fashionable follies and vices, which, step by step, soften your constitutions into rottenness and impotence; and, often-times gradually harden your consciences to apostacy and impenitence? You, oh men of trade! How generally don't you scourge your Lord, with your frauds, impositions and extortions, enhanced with the many (oh how many) lies, imprecations and perjuries, you never make a scruple of? You, O revengeful, with the rancour of your resentment? You, oh sensualists, with your obscenities? You, oh men in general, with the untold variety of your anti-christian disorders? And you, oh women, with the ensnaring vanity of your dresses and airs, or the murderous lash of your scandal-spreading tongues? Ah! let us generally confess one humble, melancholy truth: I; you; all of us, every day, more or less, are guilty of the flagellation of Christ. Yes, "ah! with daily crimes we scourge our Lord over again." But, what strange souls are ours then? Are we men, or rather are we furies? Oh, dearest Fellow-Christians! That Jesus would consent to be cruelly scourged for us, was surely an infinitely sweet excess of clemency. But that we should basely resolve to have him scourged by us, were an excess of what shall I call it? Do you find out the term to express it?

Ah, my dearest Jesus! What Christian can have the heart (or rather so far want a heart) to scourge thee over-again, who once beholds thee in spirit, loosen'd from the fatal pillar, and fallen fainting on the ground, half drown'd in thy own gore? But Jesus, methinks, rising from that pool of his own blood, launches thence to the borders of thy heart, oh Christian, and sues for admittance. To every-one of you apart, I speak, beloved. Me-

thinks I hear him, in a languid, half-expiring tone, thus pleading with your soul: "Oh, my dear soul! dear purchase of my tenderest affections! To thee I address these faint remains of a voice, once so enchanting, to tell thee, that all the pains I now endure, I only endure for thee. Number over, if thou can'st do it, all my sores; these on my back; these others on my side; these on my breast and stomach; and these too which have penetrated to my very bowels and heart. See how, as my Prophet had foretold, * *Sinners*, and you among the rest, *have built upon my back*; inasmuch as *they have prolong'd their iniquity*. And know, if you cannot number them, that of all this numberless heap of sores they have built upon me, there is not one, which was not borne for thy salvation: Some to cleanse thee of thy impurities: Some to atone for thy revenges; and all to satisfy for all thy sins. Oh dearest Spouse! Can'st thou want greater signals of my love? Do I, after all this ask too much in asking thee to love me? Of thousands of sores which call upon thee for a return of love, shall not one single one be heard? Ah, if still thou can'st not love me; if still thou has't in view some creature more lovely in thy eye than this thy Saviour thus figured for the love of thee; at least vouchsafe to pity him thou can'st not love, and do not triumph over so much blood! throughout this cruel series of tortures, for thy loved sake, I ask'd not mercy of my eternal Father. 'Tis now I ask it of thy heart. Ah, refuse it not then! Ah, spare henceforth this rest of blood and flesh, and open not fresh sores in my heart, with new offences! Remember; 'tis your GOD is speaking to you: 'Tis your Saviour who is pleading with you?" Christians! What say you to all this? Can you be deaf to the voice of this divine charmer, charming so sweetly? Can you resist the eloquence of so much blood? Can you persist unmoved at the sight of such and so many wounds? If you can; the infernal regions have no inflexibility of guilt, no obduracy of heart, which may compare with yours.

WELL, beloved brethren. What do you think of Jesus? Your Jesus scourged? Your Jesus all-over bloody? Your Jesus all-over bruises, wounds and sores? Not Caiaphas (as once of old, †) is questioning the Jews: But I unworthy minister of Jesus ask you: *What think you of Christ?* What think you of his executioners? Has he not suffer'd, think ye, enough at present? Or can they, do you think, augment their cruelty? Surely not? Surely the fresh air, which, methinks, they make about him is the emotion of returning pity awaken'd in them by the voice of so

* Psalm. cxxviii. 3. † St. Mat. xxvi. 66.

much innocent blood as they have shed? Courage then, relenting soldiers! Strip Jesus gently: Strip him anew, to apply some healing balm to the sores you have made. Without hearts of steel, it is impossible for you to restrain your tenderness at the sight of such wounds, in view of such anguish. But ah! What hopes were there that any pity should be shewn to Jesus? Too truly were their hearts more obdurate than steel. They stripp'd him indeed, but with such cruel violence; that, tearing-off his garments already glued to his congeal'd sores, they open'd them all afresh with the exquisite smart, and thus renew'd in one bloody act the whole torture of his flagellation. Grown wanton in their rage, that they might be pompously cruel; they had recourse to ingenuity; and, renouncing to every Instrument of smart made use of by the barbarity of former ages, invented one which might make all posterity shrink with horror; And plating a crown of seventy-two enormous thorns, * they forced them into his sacred head and temples with the weight of a club. What eloquence shall I make use of, Christian hearers, or what rhetoric can be needful, to express the excess of anguish which Jesus must have endured from this so unheard of a diadem? Surely you have not lived to these years, not to know, how sensible the head is to every the least pleasure or pain? Whenever that suffers, for little it suffers, the whole man must languish. But little it cannot suffer: For that, which, in any other less noble part, would be pain, in the head is spasm; is agony; and a foretaste of death. In that is the seat of life; in that are an almost infinite variety of nerves and veins and arteries; and that keeps up so perpetual and intimate a correspondence with the heart, that it never can smart without plunging the heart into the deepest distress. Eusebius in his history tells us that one single thorn lodged in the foot of a lion sent him furious about the deserts, with the rage of the pains: Shaking the very woods and rending the very skies with the loudness of his roar. Ah! Guess you then Christians, what anguish the tender Jesus must have felt from, not one single thorn, but a kind of bush of thorns all around deeply piercing and torturing his sacred head and temples. Ah! Let us say and we shall say but truth, that this cruel crown of thorns gave Jesus as many deaths as it had points, which, martyring without totally killing, plunged him in a sea of the bitterest distress. But oh heavens! Man, wretched man crown'd with roses, and the Lord of angels with thorns? What shall we say to so preposterous a treatment? How shall we account for such a horrid inversion of order?

It is the usual practice for a hero who has gain'd any signal victory over the public enemy to be car-

ried in public triumph, with the very sword in his hand with which he overcame in the battle. The malediction then which after the transgression of Adam, was laid on the whole race of men importing, among other chastisements, that the earth should yield them a continual harvest of thistles and thorns: Therefore did the divine Jesus, conquering with the torture of his thorns the malediction of human nature, chuse triumphantly to have those cruel thorns on his sacred head; and to bear them in the form of a crown: Meaning thereby to shew us that what the impious cruelty of his adversaries intended for a ludicrous torture, was in reality a diadem of victory and the mark of his amorous triumph. But oh the costly triumph! Oh the bloody diadem! To behold from every side of that sacred head and temples the gushing blood, streaming in rivulets, there through those lovely locks, here down this blessed face to enrich the earth, and clotting partly, as it stream'd, upon that venerable beard; to behold all this endured by thee for my sake; how can I forbear, my Jesus to cry-out in transports of the tenderest love and pity: *Ab! A Spouse of blood indeed art thou to me.* Ah! What shall I return to thee, my lovely spouse, for all which thou hast lavish'd upon me? What returns shall I make thee for this precious generous compact of blood, with which thou hast wedded thyself to my soul; in which thou hast given me so strong a proof of thy stupendous love? Tell me then, my love: Who put this bloody crown upon thy blessed head? But why do I ask? Ah! 'twas the hatred of sacrilegious hands, I know which pierced thy tender flesh. But then, it was the wounded love which languish'd in thy heart, that drew from thence so large a waste of blood. And still, methinks, I hear that bleeding love, in amorous complaints, cry-out to mine and every Christian's Soul: *Thou hast wounded my heart, my Sister spouse; thou hast wounded my heart!* Oh then, sweetest object of my love! Oh that I might blot out the wounds I have made! Oh that I knew but how to blunt the sting of those sharp-pointed thorns! But, alas, too truly are thy sorrows, like a sea without strand, a wide and tempestuous ocean without any shore. Yes, as thy prophet Jeremiah foretold, *great is thy affliction, like the sea, who shall heal thee?* From us at least, what relief couldst thou ever expect? From us who have so much less talent to heal than malice to wound thee?

And yet there is a way still left to heal Jesus; would Christians but resolve on it. But if the first consolation of the afflicted be to have a companion in their distress; ah what comfort, what healing Sac-

Exod. iv. 25.

Cantic. iv. 9.

Lament. iii. 13.

COURT

* St. Mat. xxvii. 29.

cour are we qualified to administer to this our wounded love? We who delight so much in ease, and are so wedded to our pleasures? We who break-out into such vehemence of resentment against our very director, if, like a skilful prudent surgeon, he attempt to stop the spreading gangrene in our conscience by a timely application of fire and steel? We who tremble at the bare thought of penance, and revolt at the sole mention of those long-forgotten means of satisfaction—Cilices, hair-cloths, disciplines, fasts and wormwood? Ah wounded Jesus then! *Who shall heal thee?* Shall our eyes distill, in tears of true compunction, a salutary balsam to alluage thy smart? Ah? What relief can our inconstant tears afford thy dolorous sores, which our repeated sins still gall afresh? Who then, wounded love? Once more, *who shall heal thee?* Christians, I say again: There is a way to heal-up every wound of Jesus; if you will but take grace and courage to make use of it. The way is to reform your manners, to break-off your criminal practices, to moderate the excesses in your dress, at your tables, in your equipages, and suit your expences better to your circumstances, to the calls of your family and the cries of the poor. The way is, to mortify that vicious itch of lying, swearing, gaming, tricking. The way is, to brow-beat and put down that shameful custom of talking in double-meaning words or phrases; and to flee as from a pest, from those licentious conversations, which even the more reserved sex too often now o' days blush not to bear a part in. Be rigorous in the discouragement of vice: Be liberal in the countenancing virtue and industry. Be slow to censure, prompt to praise where merit calls upon you for it. Be ready to redress the wrongs you have done, and ready to forgive the wrongs you suffer. Judge for the widow, support the orphan's rights, and be protectors of the poor and absent. Let no-one's reputation suffer by your tongue; no-one's person suffer by your wish; no-one's substance suffer by your hands. Merchants and tradesmen! Be nicely honest in your dealings. Debtors! Be strictly just to all your creditors. Creditors! Be tender to your insolvent debtors. Parents! Guardians! Executors! Trustees! Servants! Be faithful each to your several trusts. Christians, all! Love justice and do mercy: Flee from sin; flee from the occasions of it; and stand not with such presumptive confidence upon the border of that precipice. In short, break with the world once for all; break with it in good earnest; and resolutely throw yourselves into the arms of Jesus. Thus shall you heal up all his wounds at once. And oh how effectually! Oh with what joy to him! Oh with what advantage to yourselves! but alas thus to succour Jesus which of ye all has the heart? Thus to rejoice Jesus for a

constancy, where is the Christian truly resolved?

Well then, heartless Christians, if you will not resolve to relieve your Lord by your repentance; release him at least from your insults. Let him no longer appear before you unpitied. Shut your eyes to the rest of his sufferings: Stop your ears to the rest of this recital: And you who are resolved to do nothing for the love of him, quit the place ere I relate any thing more of the much he did for you; that you may not insult him with the farther ingratitude of remaining still insensible to all. No sooner was our divine sovereign crown'd with his painful Diadem of thorns, than to aggravate the affront the ruffians put into his hands for a mock-scepter a paltry reed; and cover'd his sacred shoulders with a rag of purple-garment; ragged and torn indeed, but not so torn as his blessed flesh was by the stripes of barbarity. In this dolorous and ludicrous guise after being again spit-upon, smote and sneeringly saluted *King of the Jews*, * He is carried back to *Pilate* to be sentenced to death. Go then, divine martyr, go to *Mount Calvary* in search of that relief, thy Christians want the heart to give thee. Death there shall put an end to all thy sorrows, which nothing in this life shall mitigate. To death, then, lovely Jesus! To death. And you, oh devout souls, prepare with pitying sighs to follow him through his painful pilgrimage, and gather-up the precious blood and sweat he shall shed along the way. But ere he begin his painful journey view him attentively, Look with an eye of contemplation to the tribune of the president, Where *Pilate* presenting Jesus to the populace thus disfigured, thus burlesqued, and at his bleeding bosom, lifting up the purple rag, cries-out to them: **LO THE MAN.** † View him then with attention. Behold this man of sorrows in his excess of love and your excess of guilt. Oh Christians! have you not heard of that eternal *Word* and wisdom of the father, by whom all things were made, the Heavens, the earth and all things in them; by whom God spoke in his patriarchs, prophets, laws and wonders? Even this is he: **LO THE MAN!** Have you not heard of that all-gracious Lord, *who when in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be himself equal to God*: Yet humbled himself for your and my sake, *taking the form of a servant, made into the likeness of men, and in habit found as man*? (a) Who when in this habit and state of man took upon him all our infirmities, (b) (Sin excepted (c),) lived a lowly, toilsome and penurious life for thirty years; (d) and spent three others in preaching teaching and exhorting sinners to re-

* St. Mat. xxvii. 29.

† St. John xix. 5.

(a) Philip. ii. 6, 7.

(c) Heb. iv. 15.

(b) St. Mat. viii. 17.

(d) St. Luke iii. 23.

pent? (e) Who cured the sick of every malady; (f) the dumb, (g) the blind, (b) the lame, (i) the deaf; (k) raised the dead; (l) chased devils; (m) commanded the winds and waves; (n) and walk'd upon the waters as upon dry land; (o) Ah LO THE MAN! And would you have thought that the very people for whom he did all this, who were witnesses to all this, who reap'd the benefit of all this, should plot together to destroy him as a common enemy; should apprehend as a felon; should bear false witness against him; should blindfold, buffet, beat and bruise him; should spit upon him, scourge him, crown him with thorns and ridicule him? Would you have thought that the very judge who found and declared him innocent should cause him to be so disfigured that he who once was *beauteous in form above the children of men*, * had neither *beauty nor comeliness* left (as his prophet foretold †) nor scarce the figure of a man? And yet it was even so: LO THE MAN! Behold him then in your excess of guilt. Behold him such as your crimes and mine have made him: His reverend head quite bare; his lovely locks dishevel'd; his heavenly face (if face that can be call'd where features are not to be distinguish'd for dirt and cuts, and spittle, blood and bruises) all wan and pale; his sprightly eyes bedimm'd with faintness; his precious cheeks sunk-in; his sacred beard irreverently torn; his blessed temples streaming with the blood, his cruel crown of thorns had forced so many passages for; his venerable shoulders cover'd with a flimsy rag of purple, which (without sheltering his sores) added mockery to his anguish; his guiltless hands tied with an ignoble cord and holding a reed of ridicule in form of scepter; with robes of infamy around his waist, about his neck, and fasten'd to his arms, as if to hinder the celestial voluntary captive from running away, whom sacrilegious cruelty had already made incapable of standing unless upheld. Thus in your excess of guilt, LO THE MAN, Such as your crimes and mine had made him! And if you think, that he deserved such usage from our hands forbear to shed a tear. Yet ah! What is all this but a faint image of my suffering Saviour? Rather then behold him in his excess of love. His love for you was infinit: and that infinit love favour'd the invention of barbarity, that it might make the more cruel havoc of him. Guess you then, if finite minds can guess, how infinit, how inexpressible his torture must be; when promoted by the immense desires of an

infinit affection. Ah Christians! think, you hear the voice of his mercy, thro' every bleeding pore of lovely JESUS, crying out to you in the words of his prophet: * *Ob all ye, who pass along the way! attend and see, if there be sorrow like to my sorrow. Hear, I say; Hear as well as see your afflicted Lord, crying-out to you from every painful limb, and calling on you for compassion. Say then what will you have done to this man of sorrows? On your decision depends his being henceforth set free from future insults of repeated crimes; or being again mystically nail'd upon the cross by your fresh offences. But ah! Still among Christians there are wretches so abandon'd, that their actions cry-out daily with the Jews, CRUCIFY HIM: CRUCIFY HIM. Oh souls redeem'd with the precious blood of Christ, is it thus you treat your loving Saviour? Shall your king be crucified again, by your perversity? Oh stubborn Sinners! Oh profligates, more obstinate, more devil-like than Judas! He when he saw his master taken, condemn'd himself and cried: *I have sinn'd, betraying just blood.* And shall Christians meditate on his approaching death and still persist resolved anew to crucify him with their Sins? Judas gave-up the ill-gotten money for which he consented to betray his Lord. And (oh Heavens!) Christians for every paltry lucre are daily ready to give-up Christ again to crucifixion. Ah! where is the Christian, who, melted with the pains of JESUS, tries to rescue him with one *peccavi*, one *I have sinn'd*? Where is the contrite heart which, throwing itself at JESUS's feet sanctifies the words of the infatuated multitude, and says with true compunction: Oh my divine Lord! Oh bloody spouse as thou art to me! Be to me indeed a *spouse of blood*: And let thy precious blood be upon us and our children, † to cleanse us from our former guilt, to create in us a clean heart, and preserve us from future offences? Go then, divine object of human barbarity; and since Christians as well as Jews will have a hand in thy crucifixion, go seek on Mount Calvary that death which the iniquitous judge has condemn'd thee to. If cruelty has harden'd the hearts of Christians into the insensibility of stone; the rocks, as heretofore, shall render homage to thy solemn sorrows and be all heart to burst with pity on thee.*

JESUS then at length is dismiss'd out of court: And judge you, ambitious worldlings, what advantage they have to expect at a court, who are resolved not to part with their innocence: judge, I say, by what Jesus gain'd there. In the little time he appear'd in the palace of Pilate, he left there his beauty, his ease, his strength and his health: He left there his blood his spirits and whole

(e) St. Mark i. xv.

(f) St. Mat. iv. 23, 24.

(g) St. Mark vii. 35.

(h) St. Mat. ix. 30.

(i) St. John v. 8, 9.

(k) St. Mark vii. 35.

(l) St. John xi. 44.

(m) St. Mat. xv. 28.

(n) St. Luke viii. 25.

(o) St. Mat. xiv. 25.

* Psalm xlv. 2.

† Isaiah liii.

* Jerem. lament. i. 12. † St. Mat. xxvii. 25.

pieces of his sacred flesh. He left there his dignity, his prerogatives, his honour and reputation. And what did he bring from thence? Why he brought thence a torn mangled disfigured body: He brought thence contempt, and ill-repute and pains and infamy: He brought thence, a crown of thorns on his head, a halter about his neck, a heavy cross on his shoulders, executioners before and behind him, a flagitious thief on each side of him, and a numerous outrageous populace all around him to kick and beat and drag and shove him along to the death he himself was so eager to meet. Go now, vain towering mortals, and seek for the opportunities of waiting on the great of this world. Go, ministers of God, and lose your time, forfeit your dignity, depreciate your character and expose your conscience with frequent visits and paying court to the nobility; who seldom favour but to deceive; seldom smile but to betray; and seldom care for but to ruin. Go, Christians; and pine away in the ante-chambers or closets of the wealthy and powerful; andameleon-like feed on the airy diet of a promise, a courteous nod, or a pleasant look; and see what you will find in your hands when you awake from your present illusive dream. Ah too fatally will you find fulfill'd in you what the prophet has said of such slaves to riches and the rich: *They have slept their sleep and at last found nothing in their hands*, * but vexation and disappointment. 'Tis even so: And oh that you did but seriously comprehend it! They who run after the quality in expectation of advancing their fortune are trading rather for disgraces than advantages; and 'tis a million to one, if after many a grievous heart-ach, they receive any better recompense than an insupportable Cross.

Such are the terms on which Jesus is dismiss'd from the presence of Pilate. After dragging him with merciless fury down the stairs of the president's palace, no sooner have the rabble got him out of it's gate than they present an enormous cross to him to bear on his shoulders to the fatal place appointed for his execution. And oh the welcome object to Jesus's longing eyes! Not with more anxious eagerness does the shipwreckt mariner lay hold on the welcome plank on which he hopes to escape the storm and ride in safety through the boisterous sea to the harbour in view, than Jesus embraced with secret joy that tree, which was to lift him to paradise and to draw thither after him a drowning world, saved from a dangerous wreck. The butchers then might well have spared their cruel pains to drag and hale and buffet him along. Hold, wretches, hold! *How long will you set thus violently upon the man, you are all combined to kill*; and run him down as if he was a bending wall or tottering

* Psalm lxxv. 6.

edifice? * Ah perfidious rabble! too glaring was your base intent. Fain would you by these violences have depreciated the value of this so generous sacrifice of Jesus, † in making that appear a force which he had made his choice. But vain was all your craft for if his feet but crept, his wishes ran in thirst ‡ of dying on the cross he bore. If he fell and fainted and fell again beneath the unwieldy burden; the fault is yours, is mine: The fault is wholly ours in adding to that already too heavy charge of his the enormous weight of our crimes. For the rest, not all your rage could urge him on so fast as his own love press'd forward; and oh how soon did not that love, in spite of all his faintness, hurry him through the guilty gates of Jerusalem?

But here again poor Jesus falls beneath his load: And here incompassion not to Jesus but to cruelty, lest the heavenly criminal should expire, ere that was satiated with his crucifixion; *Simon the Cyrenean*, whose happy lot conducted him that way, is pitch'd upon to bear the cross of fainting strengthless Jesus to the fatal Mount. Happy, I say: For oh my suffering love! Oh that it was but granted me to ease thee of thy cross and bear it for thee! But ah too rudely art thou taken up with the insults, mockeries and outrages offer'd to thee during this change of scene, for me to address thee, with my contrite sentiments. Pardon then, gentle Lord, if unable to support the sight of so much injury done thee, I turn my eyes a minute towards that unhappy faithless city on which thou hast turn'd thy back, to weep over it as thou didst once, § and pay the tribute of one pitying tear to it's irrevocable ruin. *Jerusalem! Jerusalem; Which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent to thee.* || Go on, senseless city in the riotous triumph over thy own downfall. This day thy wickedness may display the gaudy banners of triumph, and rend the sky with loud huzzas and mirthful shouts of victory. For this day thou hast conquer'd: This day thou hast subdued more than a prophet, the strong-arm'd King of prophets. But ah take notice: Thy victory is thy overthrow. And all the gaieties of mirth, which satan this day crowns thee with, are but like the gaudy trappings of a heifer, which the pagan sacrificer leads to slaughter. Oh that thou hadst but known, and that in this thy day, the things which appertain to thy peace!

* Oh that thou hadst but known how to receive and treat this Lord of peace, whom thou hast this day banish'd from thy bosom! *How often would he have gather'd thy children together as the hen gathereth together her chickens under her wings; and thou (alas) wouldst not!* † What signal solid

* Psalm xli. 3. † Ver. 4. ‡ Ibid. § St. Luke xix. 41. || St. Mat. xxiii. 37. * St. Luke ix. 42. † St. Mat. Ibid.

numberless

numberless proofs did not he give thee of his love? Still did'st thou hate and fear and perfect him as an enemy: Still did'st thou hunt him down to death, and scorn the peace he came to bring thee. And now (alas) that peace is forever *hidden from thy eyes*. * Riot then, senseless city, riot in thy ruin. Thy views are answer'd: JESUS thy only stay is cast-out from thy walls: JESUS has turn'd his back on thee forever and left thee to become a desert. † And still do'st thou remain insensible of thy wretchedness; still unacquainted with thy loss? Ah know that, in losing JESUS, thou has't lost thy beauty, strength and majesty; lost thy altars, temples, laws and sacrifice; and lost thy priesthood, royalty, and liberty. *For the days shall come upon thee; and thy enemies shall encompass thee with a trench, and enclose thee about and straiten thee on every side; and beat thee flat to the ground and thy children in thee. And they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou has't not known the time of thy visitation.* ‡ Poor wretched prostrated sovereign of the earth! Faithless helpless city! How do I deplore thee! *Ah therefore am I weeping and my eye shedding tears, because the comforter is made far from thee;* || because JESUS hath forsaken thee! But ---- why lend tears to the misery of others when perhaps too many in this audience have their own disgrace to weep over, in the loss of JESUS, For ---- how many precious Christian souls, once like triumphant *Salem*, while rich with the grace of Christ now that they have banish'd JESUS. and his grace, are, like that abandon'd capital, become a prey to ruin? Alas, what is become of those holy habits of Christian grace and virtue once infused into them? What ---- of that tenderness of conscience which kept them so fixt in their obedience to God's voice and inspirations? What --- of that pleasure taken in doing good, that fear of evil, that fervent love of God? All, all with JESUS and his grace are fled! And his dread menace is verified in their souls as in *Jerusalem: Behold your house shall be left desert to you.* ||

Away then, my Saviour, from the impious city, to more kindly *Calvary* which soon shall put an end to all thy injuries. Disburden'd of thy cross, enjoy the little respite granted thee, to gather vigour to compleat thy passion. But what do I say? JESUS indulged some respite? No: He only quitted

* St. Luke *Ibid.* † St. Mat. *Ibid.* 38.

‡ St. Luke *Ibid.* 43, 44.

§ This prophecy of Christ was accomplish'd forty years after by the total destruction of *Jerusalem*, at the same festival time of *Easter* in which Jesus Christ our Lord was crucified. See *Josephus*, Book vii. Chap. 17. and *Eusebius*, Book iii. Chap. 6, 7, 8.

|| *Lament.* i. 16.

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the burden on his shoulders to make room in his blessed breast for a double load of anguish. Still ---- who would have thought, that the eternal Father's rigorous justice should, to torment his blessed Son, employ his sacred mother? Divine Redeemer! And was this farther cruel circumstance still wanting to crown thee the sovereign of martyrs, that thy very mother should come to embitter thy anguish? When a man is once at the approaches of death; it is the common office of compassion to remove from his eyes, every living object which was dear to him: Children, friends, wife and mother; all are constrain'd to go shed their sorrows out of the patient's sight; that foreign woes mayn't add to the grievance of his own. But even this indulgence is denied to JESUS: The rigour of eternal Majesty offended, requiring that the chief created object of his tenderest love, his blessed Mother *Mary*, should present herself on his way, and conduct him even to his cross. But ah turn back most spotless, tenderest of virgins, turn back. Thy piety on this occasion is the severest rigour. Withdraw from before the eyes of thy already too grievously afflicted son, and sharpen not his sufferings with this distressful encounter. But judge you, christians, if this tenderest of mothers can suffer the life of her life to be thus inhumanly dragg'd away to death, and not bid him a last farewell. No, no: So heaven ordain'd: they meet. But oh the cruel pangs this meeting cost them both! Oh the tide of sorrows flowing and reflowing now from the heart of JESUS to MARY; now from the heart of MARY to JESUS: Now thro' the eyes of the Son; now thro' the eyes of the Mother! Thus does this new torrent of affliction rising in the gentle heart of Christ, and flowing thro' his virgin parent's eyes, overflow her compassionate soul with a sympathetic feeling of all his sufferings; whence ebbing back from her blessed throbbing breast to that of her blessed Son, it overwhelms his divine heart with an enhancement of grief, in the bitter consideration of her dolours. To comprehend the excess of agony this reciprocal correspondence of grief must have given to each; we must first be able to form some Idea of the unparalleled affection, which subsisted between these two heavenly personages! But ah who can presume to give the just idea of a love which surpass'd, in an unmeasurable degree, every other created affection? JESUS beholds his Mother, and strait forgets the lesser torments of his flesh: His soul collecting itself all into his eyes to share in her affliction, *Mary* spies-out her soul's delight: And her affections flying to embrace and cherish him, the modest maid forgets her blushes; forgets to tremble in a croud of ruffians, she who started once at the approaches of an angel. Oh my divine Son, *cries she!* Oh my beloved Mother, *cries he!* For tho' they were

were not suffer'd the leisure to converse in words, and the language of the tongue has ever less to say than vehement love would wish to express; the eloquence of their eyes was the faithful interpreter of each-other's hearts. "O my divine son (*metbinks*) *she cries!* How don't thy cross torment me? How don't I feel thy wounds along with thee, in the sympathy of my grief? How do not I regret thee and wish to die with thee?"

"Oh my distressed mother, Jesus (*metbinks*) *makes answer;* How mutual is our grief! Ah these wounds, these sores, these ropes, this crown of thorns, that heavy cross, which I so lately bore and which so soon shall bear me, all are less painful to me than thy sorrows. But since the justice of my heavenly Father, the guilt of human nature and the world's redemption require that I bear them all, 'tis fit that I accomplish this great work and crown my sufferings with my death. To this end was I born of thee. To this end was't thou made a second Eve, the common mother of the world, by being mine. Consent then cheerfully to lose one child to the earth; that thou may'st gain a multitude to heaven. And suffer me, who breathed my first vital breath in thy fond virgin arms, to yield up my last in the arms of that cross, which thereby is to give new life to human nature. Farewell then, afflicted mother, farewell: Still be thyself: Still be the first-born pattern of created fortitude: Resign me up, as I resign up thee to our eternal common Father: And know that all this tide of sorrows soon shall terminate in a sea of joys."

"Oh my adored, martyr'd son, *metbinks the dolours virgin still replies!* how shall I have the heart to leave thee; by whom alone I live, and in whose life my joy is center'd? Is not the blood which thou thus lavishest the produce of these virgin veins? Ah why then mayn't I mingle it with tears of pity from these parent eyes? Why was't thou given to me but to cherish and console? But alas! this fatal day, nor thou desirest, nor can I give thee comfort. Ah suffer then thy cross to bear us both; and let one tree receive two bodies whose souls and hearts are one. Too much I prize the plentiful redemption of mankind to ask thee not to suffer, or yet solicit thee to live. All I request is, that I may die with thee, for whose loved sake I live. Oh dearest Son!"

Oh dearest Mother, Jesus *bad rejoind:* But the impious rabble parts them with such sudden fury, that scarce could they licence each other with parting glances: If glances they may be call'd and not rather fires of consuming anguish, which augmenting their mutual flames, tortured their precious souls

with such exquisite pain as but for their perfect conformity with the divine will, must have caused them instantly to expire.

Thus the divine Jesus advances on his painful journey with this fresh thorn in his heart, tormented to the quick with the sight of his mother's sorrows; while the dolorous mother advances before him to the fatal place of execution, with the dagger in her breast of ruminating the afflictions of Jesus: Mary prepared to stand beneath his cross, there to endure by sympathy the death of her son; and Jesus prepared to climb that fatal tree and with the passion of his mother to embitter his own. Prepare then, Christians, all your recollection to behold (in spirit) this guiltless lamb, ascending up the fatal Mount. But ah! what unusual reproaches are those which on a sudden my Saviour is heard to utter to certain pious women weeping over him? *Daughters of Jerusalem! weep not over me, but weep over yourselves.** Alas, my Saviour! Is this all the return thou makest to those who pity thee? Is pity so despiseable from sinners, that thou rejectest it, even when most in need of it? Ah where is the distressed sufferer, besides thyself, who would not wish for pity in the extremes of torture? And thou alone the most distressed of martyrs still refusest it. No wonder thy enemies are so bowelleless in thy regard; when thou art so rigorous to thyself. From the tears of thy sympathizing mother thou drewest nought but an addition of anguish: And from the tears of these condoling matrons still do'st thou refuse to drink aught but the gall of afflicting reflections? *Daughters of Jerusalem weep not over me, but weep over yourselves.* Ah my Saviour! What can this mystic reprehension mean? It means, beloved Christians, that Jesus can never be pleased with the tears of those, who stand in need of a sea of the saltiest tears, to bewail their own wretched lives. The tears of his blessed mother, tho' painful in their effect, were pleasing in themselves to the heart of afflicted Jesus; because they proceeded from a fountain of purity without mixture: But what alas had Jesus to do with the tears of sinners, which, flowing from a corrupted source, must rather augment than diminish his pain. Ah! What then, dear Christian audience, are we all doing here; if we have not renounced our sinful attachments? To what purpose do we meet to condole with martyr'd Jesus; if still we hug any lurking affection to the sins which made a martyr of him: When sin is of so malignant a nature as to rob even weeping eyes, of the natural power and privilege which Jesus has given them to afford him comfort? We may even unstring our eyes with weeping for Jesus: Still will our tears be but the tears of sinners; if we continue

* St. Luke xxiii. 28.

in pursuits of sin and vanity: And still will such tears avail just nothing to administer comfort to our suffering Saviour. Oh dearest fellow sympathizers in the passion of our common Lord! If, as I hope, your consciences accuse you not of any deadly sin; weep boiling tears of compassion for suffering Jesus: But, if (what I dread) there should be any of you in this audience so wretched as to be in a state of mortal guilt; oh! weep with tears of blood; yet *weep not over Jesus, but weep over yourselves.*

But turn, oh my soul, from this sad thought, and keep-on after Jesus in his painful journey; which, painful as it is, he readily pursues to save you who are so froward to be saved. Languid and faint as were his limbs to move; how lightly did his wishes travel-on to the summit of the mountain! *Like the swift roe and nimble fawn of deer, leaping on the mountains, leaping over the hills,* * so hastes the eager soul of Jesus to the top of Calvary; while his poor shatter'd and half bloodless frame steps slow but anxious after. How many times he fell and fainted in ascending, I will not undertake to tell you, Christians. But still to see, how little able this Lord of vigour was of taking a single step without a swoon; let it suffice that, barbarity itself, partly excited to compassion, partly fearing lest he should not reach the cross, obliged him to stop by the way, in order to drink. Oh barbarity indeed! And what is the drink which is administer'd to half spent thirsty Jesus? Some delicious cordial which at once may moisten and refresh his parch'd-up palate and comfort his fainting spirits. No, no: 'Tis *Wine mixt with a bitter dose of Gall and myrrh*, † to strengthen his body to greater sufferings, without relieving his immoderate thirst. Tyrants! 'Tis to me, to the Christians of this age that nauseous draught belongs. We want it most, to harden these pamper'd bodies for fasts and vigils and self-macerations, and punish these inordinate appetites for the false sweets, in view of which they brought that inoffensive lamb to such a cruel pass. However the draught was bitter: And nothing more was necessary for Jesus (who came to punish our senses in his own) to take a thorough taste of it. But then it was of a lulling nature too: And therefore no wonder Jesus would not drink of it; whose love, enflamed with ardentest desires of suffering all for man's salvation, could not admit of aught to blunt the keenness of his sense of sufferings. Oh heavens! Shall Jesus, beloved Christians, have shewn himself thus eager to suffer all for you, and shall you perversely requite him with the refusal of suffering any thing for him: And still do you pretend to be his disciples? By these tokens I protest to you, I know you not for such. And ah! when he

* Cantic. ii. 8. 9. † St. Mat. xxvii. 34.
St. Mark xv. 23.

himself shall pass to the neighbouring valley; * if you have no better fairer proofs to give of your discipleship; I fear, he too will tell you: *Amen, I say to you, I know ye not.* †

AT length, Christians, our contemplation has led us to the top of *Mount Calvary*; and tired enough, I presume, the best of you are of the tedious way I have led you. But ah, dear guiltless victim of our crimes! if these thy delicate disciples are so fatigued with following thee, tho' but in spirit, tho' sitting at their ease; how breathless, spent and tired must not thou have been? Have patience then, beloved, yet a little longer: And soon, the bloody execrable deicide, which put an end to his fatigues, shall also put an end to yours. The fathers of the church consider our divine Lord at this juncture in the same distressful plight, as the innocent *Isaac* was, when his father *Abram* led him to the like mountain, bearing on his shoulders the wood on which he was to be immolated. And there are not wanting very respectable authors, who say, and that with great probability, that it was the very same mountain which was pitch'd upon for the burning of *Isaac* and the Crucifixion of Jesus. However of the former the apparatus was all; and God consented not that the sacrifice should be completed: Whereas of the latter the preparatives were the least part, and were only dispositions to the last extremes of distress. *Isaac* bore the pile on his shoulders, without the pain of knowing that he himself was the victim design'd by his parent to be consumed by it; and therefore ere he arrived to the destin'd place, astonish'd to find, as he imagin'd, the main thing forgotten. "Oh my Father, he cries, here is a deal of preparation for sacrificing: The place is already pitch'd upon; the sacrificer is appointed; and behold the fire and the wood. But still methinks the chief article is hitherto wanting: *Where is the victim of the holocaust?*" * Jesus had no such question, to ask: He knew, from the beginning that he himself was the victim destin'd to be sacrificed upon that cross under the weight of which he had fainted, and had almost as many falls as he had taken steps to the summit of this mountain. Hither then (where, as some eminent writers assert, the body of *Adam* was buried) arrives the divine Jesus, almost exhausted of breath and blood and spirits: Here, methinks, the justice of his eternal Father (who near four thousand years had been expecting him) appears all terrible to his encounter, holding in hand the sword of vengeance, stain'd with the blood of all the unhappy reprobates already damn'd, and lifted-up against the rest.

* *Jehosaphat.* † St. Mat. xxv. 12.
* *Genes. xxii. 8.*

of sinners: And here (more out of reverence to his father's Majesty, than even thro' the feebleness of wounded nature) the lovely JESUS, beholding his awful parent, falls prostrate to the ground and waits his eternal will. And now, beloved brethren, give me leave (for a few minutes) to become in some measure a hearer along with yourselves; while an ancient father of the church gives us his pious thoughts of this affecting scene, in the light he mystically view'd it in. This holy writer, contemplating the present passage of our Lord's passion, considers the eternal father as chief actor on this occasion, and represents him reasoning with his beloved son somewhat to this effect: "Come, my dear son! Thou from the depths of all eternity did'st offer thyself a voluntary victim for mankind, to satisfy for their misdeeds, to appease my justice and restore my injured honour. The time is now expired, which wisdom had decreed should pass ere the accomplishment of this thy gracious contract. The period now is come for thee to pay the last the total balance of the exorbitantly heavy debt for which thou has't so generously engaged thy matchless love. See'st thou, yon fatal tree upon the ground? Does not it make thee shrink with horror but to behold it? What say'st thou, my son? Ar't thou, willing to be exalted on it?" JESUS, methinks, revived at these enlivening words, gets-up; surveys the cross; stoops to embrace it; and stretching-out his blessed limbs upon it, with eyes up-lifted towards admiring heaven--Yes, Father, he cries, *Thy judgments are in my sight and thy justices I have not repell'd from me.* * *The time of thy good pleasure is come;* † that, as thou has't fitted to me a body, † I may atone with it, as with a sin-offering, for the sins of man; appease thy wrath against them and recall thy mercy. Behold then *my heart is ready,* OH GOD! *My heart is ready.* § --- Here stops the son and here the Father re-assumes. "Well, then, my son; be crucified: But that is not enough: Thou must not only be fasten'd to the cross but nail'd to it; that thus thy every member's pain may pay for every mortal's guilt. Thy hands, I know, are in themselves all-spotless. But ah! what has not the sinner done to load them with iniquities not their own? Thy right hand how have not the wicked loaded with murders, rapes, frauds and impurities? Ah! give it up then to the hammer and nail." Yes, Father: *The time of thy good pleasure is come.* Behold then *my heart is ready,* my GOD, *my heart is ready;* cries the obedient JESUS, stretching forth his hand to the executioners, who, boring it through, fix it with an enormous nail to the Cross

* *Psalms* xvii. 23. † *Psalms* lxxviii. 14.
‡ *Heb.* x. 5. § *Psalms* cxvii. 1.

"But, my son! How shall the usuries of misers, the tricks of gamesters, the impositions of tradesmen, the forgeries of the supplanter, the duels of the revengeful, the obscenities of leud men, and the vanities and laborious idleness of vain-glorious women, be atoned for, but by thy giving-up thy left hand also to the hammer and nail?"

Yes, Father: Cries the still obedient JESUS: Yes. *The time of thy good-pleasure is come;* and behold *my heart is ready,* my GOD; *my heart is ready.* Courage then, barbarians: Treat this hand as you have done the other: Pull; hale; and (tho' at the cost of dislocating every joint) force it to the place mark'd-out.

"Still, my son, thy feet are no less clogg'd with foreign guilt than were thy precious hands. So many idle steps taken in searches of vanity and sinful curiosity: So many ill-timed journeys gone in pursuit of revenge, ambition, lust, or avarice: So many dangerous paths trodden after dissipation; and so many imminent precipices presumptuously dared, how (alas) shall all these be atoned for but by subjecting thy feet also to the like evil treatment?"

Yes, Father: *Behold my heart is ready* (cries the unweariedly obedient JESUS:) Be it as thou say'st. Let the ruffians take my feet; let them bore them; let them nail them to the cross, or singly, or jointly one over the other, as their barbarity shall judge the most tormenting. Let man but be redeem'd; I care not what I suffer. Oh the stretchings! The piercings! The wounds! Oh the anguish they put him to! Oh the foundering strokes! Oh the cruel hammerings, every single blow of which, shaking the Cross of JESUS, must shock his tender, tortured frame, and revive the dolour of each fester'd sore. Methinks, in the abundance of his anguish, he complains by the mouth of his Psalmist. * Father! *They have dug my hands and my feet.* No more hands have they left me free to heal the leper, to touch the blind, to cure the sick: No more feet have they left me at liberty to visit the poor and helpless, to go in search of sinners, and carry thy doctrines, name and will from province to province. In short, they have robb'd me of health, strength, fame and liberty, and all. Ah, say then: Is not thy justice satisfied as yet? Or have I even more to undergo?

"Yes, yes; my Son: Thou has't still the sins of man's external senses to atone for. Thou has't vinegar and gall to drink to satisfy for numberless idle words, prophane jests, lies, perjuries, oaths, obscenities, imprecations, broken vows and blasphemies of worldlings; besides the wanton-luxurious, gluttonous gratifications of their

* *Psalms* xxi. 17.

"pamper'd palates. Thou has't yet to satisfy for so many repinings at Providence, detractions, calumnies, and reviling scandals utter'd against a neighbour; as well as the untold idle, vicious, backbiting and immodest conversations wilfully listen'd to by thoughtless mortals. To atone therefore for all this, strait let thy blessed body, thus fasten'd as it is to that opprobrious cross, be lifted in the air."---Ah Christians! It was then that astonish'd nature saw it's sovereign Author hoisted on a tree, amidst the huzzas and shouts, and mockeries of a brutal soldiery: It was then that adoring angels, with horror, saw the source of all their glory hanging between skies and earth, on a painful, shameful gibbet, derided, scorn'd, and made the butt of blasphemies, and taunts of an insulting, harden'd populace. It was then, my God, that thou beheld'st thy guiltless co-equal, co-eternal Son, become the victim of our crimes.

But ah! *methinks the languid King of martyrs cries:* Ah eternal Father! Are not the sins of man by this sufficiently atoned for? "No,

"my Son; *replies the divine Father.* Great is the guilt which sinners, by their internal senses, have contracted: And therefore, great is the torture which remains for thy internal senses to endure in expiation of it. Thus then, in this opprobrious posture, thou art to behold, to the fresh torment of thy bashful modesty, thy blessed body half-nakedly exposed to public view: Thou art to see two thieves made partners in thy disgrace; an impious tribe of executioners dividing thy garments among them, and that seamless coat thy blessed mother made thee, polluted in the hands of a ruffian, who gains it by the cast of a dye: Thou art to behold the sneers, the grins, the shakes of head and shrugs of shoulders, and taunting looks of an insulting multitude: Thou art to see the outrageous spear which is to insult thy precious side after death: And ah thou art to see the more sharp-pointed spear which pierces the soul of thy virgin parent, standing with thy loved disciple beneath the cross. And all this to expiate the many dissolute looks, immodest glances, unchaste ogings, as well as the numberless number of flaunting, prophane, vain-glorious, and indecent appearances abroad, which mortals have been, and still will be guilty of, in spite of all thy humiliation. Finally, in this piteous plight thou art to remain for the space of three whole hours agonizing in the utmost excess of pain."

Ah Father! what time thou pleasest best to appoint. So mankind be released from eternal death: I am disposed to suffer all. Yes, Father: *The time of thy good-pleasure is come: My heart is ready.*

Now, who would not, think, beloved Christians,

that this divine Sufferer had, by this time, fully satisfied for our sins. Whereas the worst was still to come. Thus far he had only been forsaken by mankind: But now he must undergo the very abandon of God, giving him up to the bitterest excesses of torture. But---to what greater extremes of torture can the divine rigour abandon him, than he has already suffer'd? Whereabouts shall the Almighty vengeance strike him to open a fresh wound? On his head? But that is already all-over pierced with thorns. On his face then? That is already cover'd with cuts and bruises. On his shoulders, back, or bosom? Alas, his flagellation has left there no vacant space to lodge another wound. Shall he then wound him through the eyes, the ears, the tongue? Ah, every sense has already had it's proper torments. Not even his untraying feet escaped without their equal portion of exquisite distress: And oh, my Love, *what are those wounds in the midst of thy hands,* * which with such outrage keep thee nail'd and suspended upon a shameful gibbet?

"Ah sinners, (says Jesus *me-thinks*) ask not the cause. The cause is my own love and your ingratitude. Seek not my executioners elsewhere than among yourselves. For your crimes I suffer. For the redemption of you am I crucified." Poor JESUS! How dearly has not he paid for our crimes! And yet (oh Heavens!) how cheaply do not we daily repeat them? How severely has not he suffer'd for our sins! And yet Heaven only knows, whether or not we yet feel any true sense of sorrow for them. Oh, my beloved Saviour! Oh sovereign, gracious author of our life! Are we then the authors of thy death? Were these vile hands of ours the guilty ones which nail'd thee to thy painful cross? These which opened all those horrid wounds? And still are we unmoved? Oh rocks! split ye asunder to reproach our shameful hardness of heart. Oh sinners! sinners. Yes: You are the tyrants, who have persecuted Jesus with the mortal arrows of your sins. You are the persecutors, who have forced Jesus to flee for refuge into the arms of a painful opprobrious cross. But alas! the deed is done: And now the only remedy is a sincere repentance. Ah! repent then for what is past: Repent and merit pardon. Oh, thrice, dear brethren! It was the ardent love, which Jesus had for you, that brought him to the pass in which you now consider him. Let it suffice then, that the Jesus have treated him with so much cruel outrage: Why should you, Oh Catholics, who are his own, repeat that outrage by repeating the sins for which he endured it? No: have pity on this bleeding Innocent, who loved you more than life; who loved you even to dying for you. Ready is he to pardon your past ignorance, your past folly,

* Zach. xiii. 6.

your

your past frailty: Nay, more he is ready to forgive the very malice with which you have hitherto offended him. Forbear then, at least, to offend him now, expiring on the cross: Forbear to crucify him over-again with fresh offences.

Already are we, methinks, at the last gasps of this expiring Lamb: Already do his last remains of strength begin to fail him: Already his vital spirits retreat; and from the livid wounds the precious blood distils, but by lessening drops. His venerable head leans, drooping on his sacred shoulders to bid mankind a last farewell, and leave them an example of profound humility, in this last extreme of his perfect obedience to his eternal Father. Oh Heavens! JESUS CHRIST, the eternal word of God, the only begotten Son of the Divine Father, perfect God himself as well as perfect man, the desire of the eternal hills, the expectation of the Patriarchs, the impatience of the Prophets, the good-tidings of the Apostles, the laurel of Martyrs, the crown of Virgins, the hope of ages, the end of all Time—after amorously complaining of his eternal Father's having abandon'd him, with a My GOD! My GOD! *why has't thou forsaken me;* * —after yielding-up, with the most perfect conformity his blessed Soul to his Divine Parent's disposal, with a Father! *into thy hands I commend my Spirit;* †—after praying to him for his very murderers, and pleading their excuse, with a Father! *forgive them; for they know not what they do;* ‡—after recommending St. John, to his blessed mother, for a son in his absence, and recommending his Virgin-parent for a mother to the beloved disciple, with a Woman, *behold thy Son,* Man, *behold thy Mother;* §—after promising paradise to the penitent thief, with a *This day thou shalt be with me in paradise;* ||—after having left his precious body and blood, for food to us, and farther, leaving the HOLY GHOST to his Church, persecution to his Apostles and Ministers, his Cross to repenting Sinners, and Hell to the Reprobate;—after declaring (with an *I thirst.* *) his ardent desire of fulfilling the Divine Decrees and Man's Redemption; after protesting (with an *It is consummate.* †) that all things were fulfill'd,—fulfill'd the anxiety of the Patriarchs, fulfill'd the predictions of the prophets, fulfill'd the rigours of God's justice; fulfill'd the ultimate excess of his own divine Mercy, and fulfill'd the last extremes of human cruelty and ingratitude;—after three and thirty years of innocent, edifying life:—After all this, I say, JESUS CHRIST, [in the flower of his age,—

The Seven dying Sentences of our Lord upon the Cross. * St. Mat. xxvii. 46. † St. Luke xxiii. 46. ‡ Ibid. ver. 34. § St. John xix. 26, 27. || St. Luke xxiii. 43. * St. John xix. 28. † Ibid. ver. 30.

at noon-day,—in view of the world,—with the horror of the Angels, with the eclipse of the Sun, with the revolution of the Elements, with the rending of the Temple, with the splitting of Rocks, with the yawning of Graves, with the starting-up of the Dead, and the universal convulsion of trembling Nature] * *crying-out, with a loud voice, yielded-up* ✕ Ah savages!—Say you the rest: For I have not the heart to utter more.

AND yet, what an exuberance of compassionate tenderness obliges me to stifle the solemn sadness of the Church, her melancholy notes, her low-tuned psalmody, her silenced bells and organs, her altars stript, her cover'd images and nakedness of ornaments, all loudly speak, to such as have but ears to hear, and senses to perceive. Nay, the very lifeless corse of my Redeemer should speak it to you; if (following the pious custom of other sacred Preachers) I could but resolve to shew you the naked semblance of his mangled Majesty. But why should I expose the likeness of my injured Lord to public view in an age, in an audience, in which there may be danger of exposing him to fresh affronts? Why, Christians, should I recall, one by one, those sacred wounds to sight, the memory of which may probably but serve to aggravate your guilty unconcern? To what purpose shall I uncover a crucifix to you, who have no tears, perhaps, to bewail the death of him whom it represents? Ah! could I take down from the cross this Christ, and fasten on it, in his stead, some friend of yours, who had suffer'd for you but one hundredth part of what your JESUS underwent; the sight would move you to compassion. Had I but occasion to preach to you the passion of some faithful slave of yours, who died in your defence; perhaps, you would shed some tears upon his bier. At least, you would not insult him in his coffin: At least, you would not trample on his lifeless body. And is it possible, that you, Christians, who would certainly be moved to pity a mere man, a temporal friend, nay, a bond-slave, in this condition, can still be void of every sense of tenderness for Jesus? Oh my slighted Lord! How don't I deplore thy lavish'd blood? How don't I lament thy unpitied death? Had'st thou died for devils; devils would not have treated thee with more ingratitude than Christians do.—Quickly then reach me hither a crucifix, to try a last essay with the unrelenting sinner.

Divine Redeemer! O might I, by thee commissioned, descend to the gates of Hell; and there (holding in one hand thy resemblance in a crucifix, and with the other, reaching-out to the penitent authentic proffers of thy pardon) say to those hapless beings—“Behold, rebellious spirits, your Saviour

* St. Mat. xxvii. 50.

“ hanging

" hanging breathless on a cross for love of you ;"—how instantly should not I convert the very devils ! How soon would all the abyss of Hell be changed into a paradise, and all the damn'd to saints ! And what ? Because thou has't died for men, still in possession of means, and freedom to repent ; must thy Love be scorn'd, thy Death be trampled-on, and all thy Passion be unfruitful ? Must all the fruit I reap to-day, from preaching thee thus crucified, be to render my audience more criminal ? And shall I then resign to sinners the crucifix I preach, only that harden'd Christians may tread it under foot with their obduracy ?—No, no : Keep back the Cross to spare irreverences. They who can mentally contemplate JESUS already trodden-on, torne and crucified, without a pitying tear : How shall they ever be moved with the more faint resemblance of him in a Crucifix ?

Ah Christians ! There are tears to be found for the loss of a darling, for the breaking-off of a favourite friendship, for an affront received, for an enemy advanced, for a damage felt, or a disappointment apprehended : But for JESUS no tears can be found. *Oh Heavens ! be astonish'd at this : And you, oh gates of Heaven, be exceedingly desolate.* * Now o'days, to weep at the remembrance of JESUS's death, is esteem'd a feminin weakness, an imbecility of splenetic devotion : And where a human bosom, soften'd by any forcible impulse of Grace, is on the point of melting into tears, it must be check'd for reputation's sake, to avoid the imputation of being, forsooth, a Cant. Oh age ! Oh manners ! in what a harden'd age of profligacy do we live ? Tygers ! Savages ! Monsters then ! Nay, Stocks and stones ! melt ye into compassion at the accurs'd catastrophe, the sacrilegious deicide, which cannot draw from Christian eyes one single tear. But whether does my grief transport me ? 'Tis true, we are all of us sinners, miserable sinners : But after all we are not devils : And yet how much worse than devils must not we be ; could we forbear to pity, with the utmost excess of tenderness, that generous parent who has loved us, even to the utmost excess of torture ? Let enmity, barbarity and hatred be ever so inveterate, implacable, and stript of humanity ; I remember but one instance (which I shall by-and-by relate) of it's ever reaching to insult the wretched in the extremes of affliction or depression. There is a certain dignity in eminent distress which commands a compassionate respect even from the authors of it. And one solitary happiness which attends on such sufferers is, that their misery itself is generally merit enough with their very enemies to turn their persecution into *Joseph*, while distinguish'd with caresses by his father *Jacob*, and, in his party-colour'd coat, adorn-

* *Jerem. ii. 12.*

ed with the pledges of his parents tenderest affections, was a constant mark of his brethren's envy, malice, hatred and persecution. Oh, what rancour, vengeance and cruelty, swell'd their empoison'd bosoms ; banish'd thence every sentiment of blood, and stifled every voice of nature ! Nothing less in short would appease their fury against him than the devoting him to death. *Behold the dreamer, they cry : Come, let us kill him.** But no sooner do they see him stript of his gay ornaments, deprived of the protection of their Father, and buried alive in the cistern : No sooner does he appear with fallen countenance, weeping eyes, sobbing bosom, and afflicted heart, than all their fury turns to fondness, and all their rage to pity. Ah ? *what will it avail us, they cry ; if we kill our brother and conceal his blood ? It is better . . . that our hands be not polluted. For after all he is our brother and our flesh.* †

Now the case is somewhat more piteous with regard to JESUS. We not only stripp'd him of his garment, but even of his skin : We not only spirit-ed him away from his parent to sell him to strangers ; but provoked his eternal Father to deliver him up to be slaughter'd by his own : We, in a word, not only sought his death, but really effected it. Yes ; JESUS really suffer'd death both for and by our sins. We have had his blood : What more can our insatiable cruelty covet at his hands ? If we used him so basely while living, is it not time, at least, to pity him, when dead ? For, after all, *he is our brother, and our flesh.* Oh my Redeemer ! if there ever was a man so basely treated as thou has't been ; I will not gainsay the cruelty of those Christians who are disposed to insult thee, even after death, with fresh offences. But ! if thou was't that man of sorrows, who scarce did'st retain the figure of a man ; if thou was't made *the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people* ; if thou did'st, to fulfill thy Prophet's words, become that worm rather than man, on whom the eternal Father pour-ed forth all his vengeance ; on whom the cruelty of the Gentils, the perfidy of the *Jews*, and even the ingratitude of Christianity, heap'd scourges and thorns, and nails and cross, and shame and death ; ah ! tell me : How shall we ever, henceforth, presume to offend thee wilfully again ? How shall we forbear to feel compassion for thee ? Why shal't thou remain the only injured being still unpitied ?

Come then, Christians : Let us turn our eyes and hearts to the foot of your altar. Look on that naked crucifix extended on the ground ; the faint, the feeble likeness of our mangled Lord. Despicable as that figure may appear ; more despicable still was the appearance of martyr'd JESUS, whom it represents. Just in that posture was he seen upon a

* *Genes. xxxvii. 19, 20.* † *Ibid. 26, 27.*

mount :

mount *Calvary*: So clos'd-up were his lips; so shut his eyes; so nail'd his hands and feet; so crown'd, so drooping hung his head; and so half-naked was expos'd his chaste, but slay'd, besmear'd and bloody body. Just so (as near as the shadow can approach the substance) our holy Mother his mourning Spouse, the Church presents him in that image to our sight; that in that image we may adore him, and pay our grateful homage to him; and that, in the relative respect we shew to this his feeble likeness, we may express our detestation and abhorrence of the bloody sacrilege which thus disfigured him. Take notice then, Christians, that he, who while living on his cross, recommended his Soul to his Eternal Father, now, in his dead image upon the cross, turns to you his children, to recommend his body to your care and reverence. Now, methinks, to every-one of you I hear him say: "*Into your hands I commend henceforth my body and my blood.*" Christians! See how you treat them: "See that you treat them well. What though by other hands I have been illy treated; by yours let me not be so. Or, if even you, among the rest, have used me basely hitherto; forbear to treat me so again. Nay, even *into your hands* (Oh profligates!) *I commend my blood*: Even *into your parricidal hands*. If what I have already suffer'd content you not; even renew all my passion over-again, with the renewal of your crimes. If that be not enough; trample me under foot with your obduracy of heart. Ah! harsh as all this may sound to the tender Christian's ear: All this is nothing more than what thou, in particular, art doing, oh harden'd sinner, who, lurking among these contrite children of mine, art still (in spite of all the inward checks and calls, and graces, thou hast received, during this rehearsal of my passion) saying, within thyself;—I will not quit this woman, that unjust traffic, this other evil practice:—But oh, thoughtless mortal! be not thus harden'd in thy own perdition. Why treat me thus? Why be cruel to thyself in being so to me? *Oh, my people, what have I done to you? or in what have I vexed you? answer me.*" I had a body, and for you I gave it up to death: I had a plenty of blood; and for you I shed it all: I had a heart, and that I destin'd to be yours; and yours it still may be, if you will but make it so. *What then could I do to my vineyard, and I have not done it?* Ah! can'st thou devise aught more which remains for me to do towards saving thee? Suggest it, if thou can'st; and it shall be done."

Christians! How shall we correspond to the prodigious love of Jesus, but with silently adoring him, and secretly humbling our contrite hearts.

* *Mich. vi. 3.* † *Isaiah v. 4.*

This instant then let us away to the foot of his cross, to kiss with our lips, and bathe with our tears, that memorial of his mercy. There, while, with our external homage, and relative worship of his image, we manifest our profoundest adoration of his person and memory, and thus publicly declare our detestation of the Jewish barbarity; let us inwardly kiss his sacred wounds with our minds and hearts: Let us tell him, with our souls, that were we in the place of that ungrateful nation; or, were he conversant with us (as once with them) instead of deriding, we would homage him; instead of wounding, we would adore him; instead of crucifying, we would wish to die for him: But as it is, that still we condole with him; are sorry for him; and pity him for what he has suffer'd the same, as if he suffer'd still. Yes, dearest Jesus: Behold us all united here at the foot of this thy cross, disposed with reverent hearts to adore thee; disposed with melting souls to pity thee. But *pity* did I say? Nay, more we are resolved to love thee; to love thee above all things, to love thee for thy blessed sake alone, and love thee more than life. It grieves us to our souls that ever we were so base as to offend thee: Not merely because we have deserved to lose thee, but more, because we ought incessantly to have loved thee. Forgive almighty Love, forgive, and have not our past sins in remembrance, which we are resolved rather to die then ever repeat again. Nay more, we are determin'd, once for all, to do whatever thou shalt require in proof of our loving thee. Is it thy pleasure, sweet Jesus, that we learn of thee to be meek and humble of heart? * We will, dear Lord; we will. It is thy pleasure that we renounce the things of the earth to place our treasures and hearts in Heaven? † We will do so, my God. Is it thy will, that, copying from thy *Eternal Father*, we do justice, love mercy, and join it with our sacrifices? ‡ We will do thus, dear Lord, in obedience to thee. Is it thy will that we be *wise as serpents* in the improvement of every christian virtue, and *simple* still as guiltless doves in the ignorance of every sinful practice? § It shall be henceforth our endeavour to be such. Wil't thou that we copy after thee in the exercise of mutual charity towards one another. || Wil't thou that we be *watchful* over ourselves and fervent in *praying* to thee. * My Saviour, from this time forward, thou shalt be punctually obeyed. Wil't thou, in a word, that we study to become perfect † as also our heavenly Father is perfect? Be it so: By the assistance of thy grace we will be perfect, we will be saints. Shall it be said

* *St. Mat. xi. 29.* † *Ibid. 6, 19.*
 ‡ *St. Mat. ix. 13.* § *St. Luke vi. 36.* || *St. Mat. x. 16.* ¶ *St. John xv. 17.* * *St. Mark xiii. 33.* † *St. Mat. vii. 48.*

that

that we indulge our vices, after seeing our God and Saviour die for them? Forbid it, gracious Jesus! And oh, forbid that any here be damn'd by relapsing into sin! No! We have all pitied thee as suffering: And we are all resolved so to live, for the time to come, as that we may one day enjoy thee glorified. But, in the mean time, dear Jesus, dismiss not me, nor any of this audience, to our homes without thy benediction. Unnail thy right-arm, and loosen'd from the cross, stretch it forth upon us, to sprinkle us with thy precious blood, and efficacious grace, by blessing us with thy own paternal hand.

Look ye, beloved brethren, Jesus is perfectly disposed to act the tender parent towards you all; if you will but act the part of children, and give-up yourselves to him, intirely, sincerely, and for good. And can there be a wretch so harden'd as, on this solemn day of love, not to give-up himself intirely to Jesus? Yes: strangely some-how my heart mis-gives me, that there may yet be lurking, in the midst of us, some reprobate still bent upon resisting all the Love of Jesus. Yes: Methinks, I hear him say: "No matter: I am still resolved not to abandon sin, nor quit my vicious habits, in spite of all."—*That is:* "No matter for all these stripes and thorns, and blood-shed, which Jesus submitted to for me. In spite of all, I do not love him. In spite of all, I am resolved to sin again, though it offend him."—Alas! what shall I say to such a wretch (if such a wretch there be) more than what the apostle has already said: If any man love not our Lord JESUS CHRIST, *let him be anathema*, let him be *accursed*. *—Accursed indeed, and thrice accursed! Since the last, heaviest and worst of curses which can befall a man is, that he love not JESUS.

That monster of her sex, and of human nature, the inhuman *Tullia*, aspiring to her royal Father's throne, deem'd it impossible to relish the most common enjoyments of life, till, by embruing her hands in his blood, she might have it in her power to satiate her ambition. Wherefore, to satisfy her criminal pride and impatience, and reign some months the sooner, by transferring the crown of *Rome* immediately from the head of her ancient parent to that, of her husband *Tarquin*; in conjunction with him, she contrives to have the revered Sovereign massacred. Yet, had she stopt here; her unnatural barbarity had not remain'd, without example. But—returning from the capitol, whither she had been to congratulate with her husband, upon his butcherly access to the diadem of the murder'd monarch; so cruelty disposing, her chariot was stopt, in it's career, by the dead body of the royal assassinated *Servius*, which, still warm, lay

welt'ring in his blood in the midst of the street: None presuming to approach it for awe, save his impious daughter; who, without the least emotion of respect or concern for her injured parent, would not so much as suffer her coachman to turn his horses aside, but commanded him to drive over it. Nevertheless, the very beasts, who drew the gaudy parricide along, struck with horror, attempted to recoil; and the driver, shrinking with reverential awe, at the melancholy spectacle, stopt'd to give leisure for some kindly return of pity in the monster's breast, in hopes of a counter-order. But the tygres *Tullia*, as much a stranger to pity as to remorse, with a peremptory, unrelenting air, again commands him boldly to drive over the body of her slaughter'd father. "For, *say'd she*, the shortest "way to government is the best."—Oh miserable reprobate, whoever thou may'st be, lurking amidst this croud of weeping Christians, unconcern'd and unconverted! Is it not enough that, like the bow-ellefs *Tullia*, thou has't laid thy God and Father weltering in his blood; unless thou insult his death by stifling every emotion of returning pity; every sense of awakening remorse; every voice of converting grace? Courage then: Thou has't but one step farther to proceed, in order to come-up with her. If thou art absolutely bent, like her, on not repenting; like her be boldly wicked: Drive resolutely over the cross of assassinated Jesus, by thy contempt, and quit this audience: That thou may'st not, with thy presence, suspend the sweet effects of his tender mercy from lighting on this congregation of innocents and penitents. Away, away with the holy cross from before that altar: Or rather away with that excommunicable reprobate from before it; who like another *Judas*, is preparing to kiss it, only to betray with fresh offences the Lord it represents. Open those doors and banish the traitor from among you. But the business is to pick him out: And Jesus, whose long-suffering patience permits the tares to grow-up with the corn, will not discover those, till this be ripe, and ready for the eternal harvest. Unhappy wretch then, whoever thou art, repent this instant, I conjure thee; or leave this place: And let there be for thee no more sacraments nor sacrifice; no, nor a crucifix in death for thee to cast thy eyes upon, who, daring life, can't treat it with such foul irreverence.

But, what am I saying, Christians? To whom can this anathema be applicable? To no-one, I hope; at least, I hope, to no-one in this sanctuary. This day is a day of love, a day of benedictions, and not of anathemas. Let no-one be kept at a distance from the Cross of Christ upon this day, on which his love was pleased to plant it as his standard to gather all to him. And surely, none of you, my dear-

* 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

loved hearers, can be so strangely wedded to perdition as to chuse rather to trample on the death of Jesus, and be banish'd from his altar, than to return to him? Surely the bare thought of deserving such a censure must shock your very souls, and be enough to inspire you to put a final stop to sinning? What Christian then can be so harden'd, so perverse, so devil-like, as, on a day made sacred by the death of Jesus, not to devote himself intirely to this great Lord of Love? Surely, my crucified Redeemer, it is impossible? Surely, thy unexhausted mercy will forbid it? Behold us here, at least, all prostrate with our souls before thee; desirous, at the foot of thy Cross, to end our lives, this instant, or to begin them over-again, and live henceforth to thee alone. Lo! I, the unworthiest of thy ministers, in my own name, and in the name of all my contrite hearers, with utmost bitterness of soul, implore thy pardon for myself and them, and every contrite Christian. Pardon, dear Lord, of that venerable head, our crimes so cruelly have crown'd with thorns: Pardon of those blessed feet and hands our feet so barbarously bored with nails: Pardon of that sacred side our vices pierced: Pardon of that heavenly heart which our perfidy so grievously oppress'd with tears and griefs, and smart: Pardon of all those guiltless members which our enormities tormented to excess: Pardon of all those deadly stripes and wounds, and sores, with which

our guilt once cover'd thee from head to foot! Pardon! Pardon! Pardon for what is past! And, for the time to come, no more will we offend thee with fresh sins. No, GOD of my heart: No more sins for us; no more, no more. This is our last, our firm, unalterable purpose: And by the aid of thy all-powerful grace in this fixt resolution will we live and die.

Come then, Christians, be faithful; and see that you make good my words. You, who have not resolved, resolve this instant: You, who have resolved, be steady to your promise. Do you but mind the future, and JESUS shall pardon what is past. *Go then and sin no more, lest something worse befall you.* * Thus ere you go, let me, with my soul upon my lips, conjure you never to offend again your loving, lovely JESUS, who, that he may not be constrain'd to exert himself, one day, your angry judge, has this day proved himself your gracious Saviour, and bled to death for love of you. Yes: I his unworthy minister, once more conjuring you never to offend again this Lord of Love, do, in his name, and by the priestly powers I hold from him, give to you all his blessing: From this instant then *may the Almighty GOD of Hosts, FATHER, SON and HOLY GHOST bless and preserve you*, and make you all his own to all Eternity. AMEN.

* St. John v. 14.

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A F A R E W E L L S E R M O N

Preached at the H—, in 1741.

A C T S xx. 18, 20, 22, 26.

You know from the first day that I enter'd in among you, in what manner I have been with you all the time; How I have withdrawn nothing which was profitable, but that I preach it to you, and taught you openly, and from house to house. . . . And now behold, being bound by the Spirit, I go to Jerusalem. . . . Wherefore I take you to witness this present day that I am clear from the blood of all. For I have not spared to declare to you all the counsel of GOD.

WHEN St. PAUL was about to resign the care of his beloved flock at *Ephesus*, he gather'd them together to take leave of them. And the oeconomy of his Farewell Sermon was comprised under these few heads. In the first place to leave such an impression on their minds of the doctrine he had taught them, as might give a perpetual sanction to it; he declares it to have been the counsel, and none but the counsel of GOD; and, to add a farther weight to it, he reminds them, that his was all the labour, theirs all the profit, arising from that doctrine. *I have withdrawn nothing, says he, which was profitable; but that I preach'd it to you, and taught you openly, and from house to house,* * not making my life more precious than myself, nor sparing to declare to you all the counsels of GOD. †

Secondly, He signifies to them that for the future it will be their interest to practise in his absence, what his duty obliged him to admonish them of, while he continued among them: And this he does in the most affecting manner. *Bound by the*

*Spirit, I go to Jerusalem, says the Apostle. * And now, behold I know that you shall no more see my face, all you, through whom I have past, preaching the kingdom of GOD. Wherefore I take you to witness, this present day, that I AM CLEAR FROM THE BLOOD OF ALL. †* And in these words he seems to have had in view that important passage in *Ezekiel*, ‡ where GOD tells his minister: *If, when I say to the wicked, DYING THOU SHALT DIE, thou tell him not, nor speak, that he may be converted from his wicked way, and live; the same wicked man SHALL DIE in his iniquity, but HIS BLOOD WILL I REQUIRE AT THY HAND.* Whereas, on the other side, *if thou denounce to the wicked, and he be not converted from his impiety: he indeed SHALL DIE in his iniquity, but THOU HAS'T DELIVER'D THY OWN SOUL.* § This latter was happily the case with St. Paul: He was conscious of having faithfully discharged the duty of his ministry; and therefore might boldly say to his flock what he did say: "I appeal to yourselves, beloved children, whether I did not, while I had the care of you, faithfully acquit myself of my duty towards you; whether I have not preach'd to you the Word of GOD, in all it's purity, without disguising or stifling the counsels which Heaven design'd you by my mouth, or feigning any of my own; and whether I have not, on all occasions, exhorted the good to persevere, and warn'd the wicked to desist in time from their ways, and repent. It is not then for myself I am now concern'd. No, thanks to the Divine Grace: *I have deliver'd my own soul. I am clean from*

* *Acts* xx. 20. † *Ver.* 27.

* *Acts* xx. 22. † *Ver.* 25, 26. ‡ *Chap.* iii. 18. § *Ibid.* 19.

"the blood of you all. You therefore are now all my concern: For you is all my sollicitude; that you be as anxious to deliver your souls, as I have been to deliver mine; that you profit by my labours; and keep each of you clean from your own blood, by neither forgetting nor neglecting the advices I have given you. For, though, while I had the care of you, I was jointly interested with yourselves in making you good, or keeping you so; now, that I resign, the charge of you, I declare against having any hand in your damnation: I wash my hands of your blood, and throw wholly on yourselves the weighty affair of your salvation." Thus much seems comprised in those mysterious words which make-up the Second head of our Apostles's discourse, *I am clean from the blood of all.*

In the Third place to put them still more upon their guard against rendering his past labours fruitless, nay pernicious, by their neglect; he charges them, not to lose the grace, nor slight the inspirations, which they had received from God by means of his apostleship; an apostleship which had cost himself so much pains and anxiety. And farther, that they may not slight the important caution, by thinking it unnecessary; he warns them, that their faith and virtue, after his departure, will be violently attack'd, on all sides, from without and even from within; and, therefore, that it must be of the greatest consequence for them, in his absence, to become watchmen to themselves, to keep a sharp look-out against external enemies, and to keep an unwearied watch over themselves. *I know, says he, that, after my departure, there will ravening wolves enter-in among you, not sparing the flock. For which cause be vigilant, keeping in memory that for three years, night and day, I ceased not with tears to admonish every one of you.**

Fourthly, That his removal from them might leave no ill impression on the minds of his hearers, to the prejudice of his doctrines; he solemnly declares that the spirit of avarice had no more share in his quitting them than it at first had any part in his coming among them: For, that nothing but his spiritual obligations made him resign-up the immediate care of them. *Bound by the Spirit, says he, I go to Jerusalem.* As if he had said, "'Tis not, my dear children, any lucrative view which takes me from you, but the duty of following whither my spiritual obligations summon me. 'Tis not the love of commodious translations, nor the desire of better worldly accommodations than I have among you, which induces me now to throw-up my charge. If sordid interest had any influence over me; why did it not bias me all the time I have been among you? Whereas,

* *Acts* xx. 29, 31.

"that it never did, I appeal to yourselves: Be you my judges, that I have not acted the part of a mercenary with any of you. *No man's silver and gold, or garment have I coveted. Your selves know that for such things as were needful for me . . . these hands have minister'd.**

Finally, the Apostle, to crown all his apostolic labours, recommends his beloved flock to God, as he had often done before: By doing which he lays them under the strictest ties of gratitude to do the like for him. *And now I recommend you to God, says he, and to the word of his grace . . . And falling on his knees he pray'd with them all. †*

Such, beloved Christians, such in substance was the Farewell Sermon which the great St. PAUL made to his *Ephesian* disciples, before his departure from among them; after having been their immediate pastor and residing amidst them preaching and teaching for the space of three years.

It is not quite so long, dearest auditors, that I have fulfill'd the apostleship to you. However: As, from the first day of my coming to you, even to this present time, I have earnestly wish'd to copy after this great apostle's zeal, by instructing you fully in your Christian duty and exhorting you to it with unwearied assiduity; so, being now about to resign the immediate charge of you, I cannot wish to copy after a better master, even in taking my leave of you.

You know then, beloved, and to yourselves I appeal for the truth of what I say: I have used my utmost efforts to instruct you in your duty; and have omitted no practicable means to persuade and win you over to the practice of it: *Night and day not ceasing, with tears, to pray for and admonish every one of you.* I have been constantly at the beckon of such of you as wanted me; to visit you, in sickness; to comfort you, in affliction; to guard you, in innocence; or call you to repentance. I have unfolded to you whatever I found useful towards the knowledge of God, the love of him, and the beatitude of an eternal union with him; and have not wilfully neglected any opportunity, or omitted any circumstance which might possibly be of advantage to you. In short, if it be lawful for a wretched sinner to adopt the words of a glorious saint; I may with truth say, after the great apostle of the gentils: *I have withdrawn nothing which was profitable; but that I preach'd it to you, and taught you openly and from house to house.* I have neither sooth'd you in vice nor flatter'd you out of virtue: Neither a mean desire of pleasing and humouring you, nor a servile fear of offending you has deterr'd me from consulting your salvation: I have given-up my time, my ease, and all my thoughts to your service; and to speak with apostolic truth and freedom in apostle-

* *Acts* xx. 33, 34. † *Ibid.* ver. 32, 36.

lic words, * I have not made my life more precious than myself, nor spared to declare to you all the counsel of God.

What vain boasting is here! *Some of you, perhaps may be tempted to say to yourselves.* But Christians! Be not hasty to judge; lest you repent at leisure the injustice you would do me. St. PAUL, I presume, had no vain-glory in what he said: neither have I. What I have done for you, while among you, I did with pleasure; and what I took pleasure in doing was my duty to do; nay and my interest also. Ever since I have been with you, I have thought that *the word of the Lord was made to me*, by the mouth of the prophet, † saying: *Son of man, a watchman to my people have I given thee: And thou shalt bear the word out of my mouth, and shalt tell it them from me. If when I say to the wicked, DYING THOU SHALT DIE, thou tell him not, nor speak, that he may be converted from his wicked way and live; the same wicked man SHALL DIE in his iniquity: But HIS BLOOD WILL I REQUIRE AT THY HAND.* My own salvation then, Christians, was at stake in the care I have taken of yours; being made accountable to God's rigorous justice for every soul among you, which should perish through any neglect of mine. I consider'd myself as the *Watchman* appointed by heaven, to guard your souls and warn you of danger. *And if the watchman see the sword coming, says the Lord, † and sound not with the trumpet; and the people look not to themselves; and the sword come and take a soul from among them; that soul indeed is CAUGHT IN HIS INIQUITY: But HIS BLOOD I WILL REQUIRE OF THE HAND OF THE WATCHMAN.* I had no other chance therefore to deliver my own soul from perdition, than (by discharging the part of a faithful watchman) to study your common safety. For, says the Lord: § *If, thou telling the wicked that he convert from his ways, he convert not from his way; HE SHALL DIE in his iniquity: But THOU HAS'T DELIVER'D THY SOUL.* Tell me then, Christians, where is the room for so much as the bare appearance of boasting in a matter of so much self-interest? To do what I have done for you was my interest, and therefore was it my chief study; and therefore I trust in God, that, with truth and without boasting, I may this day protest, in the presence of heaven and you, that, if I have not effectually converted all of you from all your sinful ways; I have at least warn'd you of them enough to DELIVER MY OWN SOUL.

And the great reason I have for making this open solemn protest, is the hope I entertain of shocking you into vigilance for your own safety, by reminding you of the greatness of your danger in giv-

* Acts xx. 24. † Ezech. iii. 17, 18.

‡ Ezech. xxxiii. 6. § Ibid. ver. 9.

ing way to neglect. While I was your immediate pastor, your spiritual watchman; you might think, perhaps, that your vigilance was less important; I being equally concern'd with you all to watch for the safety of all. But remember: The case is now alter'd; and I now sound the last trumpet of God's truth, as your immediate pastor; to warn you, that I now throw the whole care of your salvation on your own hands. *And he, who beareth the sound of the trumpet* (says the Lord by the mouth of EZECHIEL. *) *whoever be he, and doth not look to himself, and the sword come and take him, HIS BLOOD SHALL BE UPON HIS OWN HEAD..... But if he shall look to himself, HE SHALL SAVE HIS LIFE.* It is wholly then, Christians, your own eternal interest to practice, for the future, what it has hitherto been my interest, in part, to teach you. As I could not, while among you, deliver my own soul, without revealing to you all the counsel of God; so neither can you be clean from your own blood without committing that counsel to memory and execution. Think not, by trusting to the vigilance of the worthy pastor who succeeds me, to exempt yourselves from the duty of waking to your own safety and remembering the admonitions I have given you. No: Let your pastors be ever-so wise, good and zealous; all their vigilance, all their zeal for your salvation, will be lost upon you; if it be not accompanied with equal diligence on your own part. And there is little room to hope you will prophet by their instructions; if you wilfully forget those, which, with so much labour sweat and anxiety, I have endeavoured to give you.

If my labours should unfortunately have proved fruitless to some of you; if I do not leave you all better Christians than I found you; if any of you are still unreform'd of your ancient faults, still unprovided with new virtues, which I have no room to suspect; examin your own breasts for the cause. Is it not perhaps owing to a secret perversity in your own nature, which may have made some of you despise, forget or neglect the salutary counsels I have given you? May you not have come to hear me out of a spirit of idle curiosity, or some other earthly motive, rather than with those sentiments which alone can justify your coming hither (*I mean*) an humble consciousness of your want of information; an earnest pious desire of being instructed in heavenly knowledge; and a serious resolution of following the instructions you might receive? Or perhaps, may not God have refused to some of you the light of his grace; that light, without which you could never reap benefit from any instructions I was capable of giving you? May not God, I say, have denied, and justly denied you,

* Ezech. xxxiii. 4.

that grace; because you either never vouchsafed to ask it of him, or ask it but seldom, and ask it but faintly? And what fruit then could any endeavours of mine abound with where the hand of God has been wanting? For oh Almighty source of all good gifts! By thee enabled to do all things, what profitable action can we do without thee? *It is neither he who plants* (as my great master observes *) *nor he who waters; but thou, O God, who must give the increase:* And from thee alone must the whole work of our justification be originally derived. If therefore, dearest brethren, all I have hitherto said to you has proved to any of you quite fruitless; if there be any of you as perverse as ever; if there be one among you, whose evil habits, inclinations and attachments are still the same, take all the guilt upon yourselves: for me I protest I wash my hands of all the blame; *and I take you, this present day, to witness, that I AM CLEAN FROM THE BLOOD OF YOU ALL.*

On the other hand, beloved, if the word of God, which I have labour'd to sow in your hearts, has taken root and increased there; For heaven's sake, for your own, for my sake and the pains I have been at to cultivate and preserve it in you, oh! promote the growth of that precious seed. Let not the dear inestimable grain, given to feed you to eternal happiness, become, thro' your neglect, the aggravation of your misery. Stand then upon your guard, that the enemy rob you not of your harvest, nor convert your aliment into poison. I know, and it is with grief I reflect, how greatly you are exposed to the assaults and snares of hypocrites, infidels, private debauchees, and scandalous profligates; who, once they observe you mended in your manners, will practice every *Satanic* art to divert you from your virtuous pursuits; to drag you to vice: And, where neither hopes nor fears, neither pleasures nor pains neither persuasion nor example are sufficient to shake your fidelity; they will try to laugh you out of your pious sentiments. But, by all which is sacred in heaven and earth; by all which is dear to you; by as much as you tender the salvation of your souls; let nothing make you stagger in your pious purposes. Never be led-away from your eternal felicity by the promises or threats, much less by the persuasion, example, or ridicule of wicked men. No, nor suffer even the seemingly good to impose upon you false or impious doctrines. Remember the doctrines I have deliver'd to you: Follow them: And *altho' we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preach'd to you; let him be anathema; † believe it not.*

* 1 Cor. iii. 7. † Galat. i. 8.

However, beloved brethren, you can be in no danger of this, while you happily remain under the direction of the worthy pastor to whose immediate care you are trusted. It is a blessing which none but Catholics enjoy, that, changing shepherds, they are sure not to change pasture. Let their preachers be ever-so often varied; the doctrine is still the same. And you, Christians, will enjoy this blessing in an eminent degree, in the pastor whom I have recommended to you to succeed me in the function of preaching and teaching. To this you yourselves seem to be no strangers. In fact you have approved my choice: You have chosen him unanimously to succeed me; and, therefore, do I now resign the care of you to him. Still the only consideration which could make me think of resigning the care of so pious, so exemplary a flock, a flock so dear as you are to me: The only inducement to it, *I say*, is the knowing that I cannot spiritually provide for you better, than by leaving you in such hands. You cannot but be sure that he will take full as much pains with you as I have done: And as he is much better qualified than I dare think myself, I hope, his apostolic labours will have, at least, an equal success with mine.

At the same time: That the little pains I have hitherto taken for your spiritual good, may not be frustrated by an misconstruction of my soliciting your consent to give-up the care of you to another; I think it a duty incumbent on me publicly to declare: And accordingly at the foot of this sacred altar (where, if a priest is ever to be believed, I hope to gain credit) I solemnly do declare, that no motive of avarice, or ambition; no love of translations, or desire of better accommodations led me to this resolution of resigning; but the sole desire of being, in some sense, *anathema for you*, by preferring your spiritual good to my own temporal convenience. In giving-up the temporal assistances you allow me, I have no visible prospect of a greater, equal, or even any certain provision elsewhere. Nor have I any other fix'd reliance than on that Divine Providence which never did, and I am certain never will, desert me. It is then the desire of fulfilling my spiritual obligations to you, by putting you into better hands, which removes me from you. And, therefore I may boldly say, after my great master, that *being led by the Spirit I go from among you*. If any of you should be undispensed to believe me, which I hardly can think possible; compare my past with my present deportment to you. If ambition or avarice had now the least sway with me in leaving you; why did they not bias me while conversant among you? Whereas, that they never did; I appeal to yourselves. For you know, from the first day that

I enter'd

I enter'd in among you, in what manner I have been with you all the time. Where is the poor man, who can say I ever neglected his rags? Where the rich man among you, who can say I courted his gifts or favours? For the glory of God, and the confusion of hirelings, if there be one such, let him come forth and give me the lye in the face of this numerous assembly. But: Thanks to the divine Grace, *No man's silver and gold, or garment have I coveted.* Indeed, I have not, with St. Paul, had the glory to toil in the occupation of tent-making. And, therefore, cannot say in the same sense: *For such things as were needful for me, these bands have minister'd.* But ah, how often have I wish'd to live in an age, in which I might have said so! Happy, thrice happy St. Paul, who lived in such an age: Happy, I say, to live in an age, when nothing but sin was sin; and nothing gave scandal but vice and folly. But, in this age, how would each flock condemn a pastor, who, for the sake of preaching the Gospel freely, should join the honest industry of mechanic labour with his apostolic toils! It is not then for want of will I follow'd not the Apostle in this, but for fear of scandalizing the modish Christian. Might I do it without offending; these fingers should labour to the bone, rather than the Gospel-liberty of this tongue should lose it's weight, for any thing the laity have to give. But since I might not do it I have therefore thankfully taken what you were pleased to give, unask'd; without so much as one bare hint to draw a favour from you. I say thus much barely to convince you, that, though your bounty has far exceeded my deserts, or even desires, I never served you for the sake of any of your temporal favours. No, dearest christians, I have all-along labour'd to feed you, not to fleece you: Not your riches have I coveted but your salvation. For the great unfolders of hearts knows how sincerely and disinterestedly I love and esteem you all; and that you are all, that you are every-one of you, dear to me in Christ as a first-born, as an only babe to the parents who gave it being. And, therefore, nothing could make me cheerful under the circumstance of bidding you, Farewell; but that, tho' I shall no more act as your immediate pastor, I shall still, in some sense, have an eye over you, by frequently, in compliance with your request, having the comfort of preaching to you, and that *gratis*.

Give me now, dearest children, give me leave to do you the justice which is your due, by returning you my humblest thanks for the great liberality and goodness you have shewn to me, but much more by owning the obligations I have to you for the very great pleasure you have in general given me, in shewing by your deportment from time to time, that my little endeavours were neither ill-

taken nor ill-bestow'd. Whence, I hope, I may reasonably conclude, you are convinced, that, whatever I say'd was design'd for your good, however uncouthly it might be spoken. At least I assure you, that, if any part of my conduct, or expressions, ever gave you offence, it was (by so much) beyond my intention. Nevertheless, inoffensive as my designs have been, I freely ask your pardon for every unknown misfortune of displeasing or scandalizing you; and promise myself from your Charity, that you will readily grant it. Your ready and christian compliance hitherto with whatever I exhorted you to, plainly shews that you want only to be reminded of your duty in order to put it in practice. And, as my successor, in this ministry, is zealous enough to be willing to instruct you in the obligations of a Christian; so, I hope, he will have courage enough never to spare you, when you are remiss in them. And, as I know, he will struggle hard to keep you strictly constant to the Holy Sacraments, and to the religious observance of holidays and fasts; so, I strenuously recommend to you, the being faithful in these particulars, as well as in a respectful, dutious compliance with the admonitions which both your pastors may judge it expedient to give you. God has peculiarly blest you with two, who are good, learned, wise, and orthodox: Endeavour therefore to deserve the continuance of this blessing by your behaviour to them. And whatever you do, invert not the order of nature and grace, by presuming to lead your leaders; but be content in spirituals to follow them, like a faithful, loving flock. The bounty you have had for me has been (I own) the pure effect of your own liberal charity; but the case is quite different with regard to your present worthy shepherds. Their merit will make that bounty and the continuance of it an indispensable debt. All the fault (I dare say) which you will find in them, will be a self-diffident modesty; if that may be call'd a fault. And if it be one, beloved, don't excuse it. No; be revenged on them for it; and be revenged like Christians, *that is*, by striving to excell them, and by studying to conquer their modesty with encouraging goodness.

There remains nothing more for me to add, than to recommend you all to God, as I do, and beseech him to pour-down upon you all every sort of blessings in this life, which are any ways conducive to and consistent with the eternal blessings of the other. And now, dearest Christians, I conclude with a double request to all and every-one of you, the *first* part of which concerns yourselves most; and it is to implore, that you would be diligent to learn from your pastors what you ought to do, and faithful to put it in practice. Be but as solicitous for the eternal future as you are for the present temporal.

poral, and you'll soon become perfect Christians. The *second* part of my petition relates to myself: And is, to beg that you would all charitably join in prayer to GOD for me, to obtain me this one great blessing and no more, *that is*, that he will vouchsafe to make me just what he would have me be. You have some interest yourselves in procuring me this mercy. For,---once your intercession takes effect, my prayers will in course become as effectual as, for your sakes, I wish them. And thus shall we, by mutually helping one-another, have the joy, at the last great and general meeting, to be admitted into Heaven, like flock and pastors: You in a body, and I and my fellow labourers at

the head of you: Or rather shall we enter like brethren, hand in hand, into that eternal kingdom of Glory, where we shall all be but one flock under one Shepherd, CHRIST JESUS. Thou then, Oh supremely good and gracious Shepherd, guide us safe to thee. Send us the Comforter in the mean time to lead us on in every truth, and warm us with a lively, unalterable faith, a filial well-grounded hope, an ardent, fruitful love of thee, and perfect peace and charity with one-another. Oh grant this, we beseech thee, in thy unwearied, wonted mercy, and, *In the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY-GHOST. AMEN.*

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